

Beating The
French Defense

With The

Advance Variation



GM Andrew Soltis

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Chess Digest, Inc.

**Beating the French Defense with the
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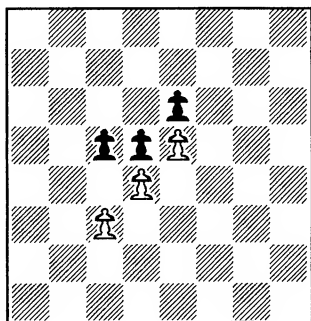
INTRODUCTION

An increasing problem these days in facing the French Defense is the number of options at Black's disposal: there are too many of them for White's comfort.

It used to be that White had the major choices, between developing his knight at **d2** or **c3** on the third turn. But nowadays it is Black who has more options. He can, for example, meet **3 Nc3** with the Winawer (**3...Bb4**), or with **3...Nf6** invite the Burn (**4 Bg5, dxe4**) or the Classical (**4 Bg5, Be7**) or even the MacCutcheon (**4 Bg5, Bb4**).

To avoid memorizing a lot of complicated and ever-shifting analysis, we propose a relatively simple alternative for White: the Advance Variation. Currently undergoing a revival, this old war-horse, analyzed first by Greco in the 1600's, has the benefit of employing a set of positional principles not well understood by many French Defenders.

In Russia, among other centers of chess culture, the Advance Variation is sometimes known by a different name: the Nimzovich Variation. And that is only fitting. Because it was the pathfinding, Riga-born Nimzovich (1886-1935) who first undertook a study of the complex subject of pawn chains. In fact, the thirty page chapter of Nimzo's *My System* devoted to pawn chains dealt chiefly with those arising out of the Advance Variation French Defense.



Nimzovich explained that by advancing his e-pawn to the fifth rank, rather than trying to open the e-file with **exd5**, White has cut the board into two theaters of war. The e-pawn acts "as a demobilizing force", a "wedge",

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which deprives Black of the ability to defend his kingside with ...Nf6. That kingside is a natural target for White forces, including bishops at d3 and c1, a knight at f3 that can hop menacingly to g5, and a queen that lands on g4 or h5 in one move.

Black, Nimzo points out, may try to cut off one of the attacking diagonals with ...f7-f5 -- which also increases communication of his pieces along the second rank. But, as usual, any significant move in a balanced middlegame such as ...f7-f5 is bound to create new opportunities while stifling old ones.

"This otherwise excellent defensive idea," wrote Nimzovich, "would, however, fail because the pawn at e4 would protest violently." In most cases White will capture *en passant* on f6, after which e5 will become a backward target pawn on a half open file. Also, depending on how Black retakes on f6, he will be conceding either e5 or h6 to White's invasion force.

"There was a time," Nimzovich continues, "when it was the firm conviction that a pawn chain, with the disappearance of one of its links, must give up all pretension to a happy existence." That is, once White has played exf6, or, in response to c7-c5, the alternative dxc5, he has spent part of his opening treasure. But, Nimzovich asserted, while the squares d4 and e5 may not be occupied by pawns any longer, as long as they are under control, they become valuable assets.

Yet White must be careful not to liquidate the center too quickly, else the vital square will fall under Black's control. For example, after 1 e4, e6 2 d4, d5 3 e5, c5 4 dxc5?!, Bxc5 5 Nc3? Black with 5...f6! will soon be able to advance his own pawn to e5 to liberate his game.

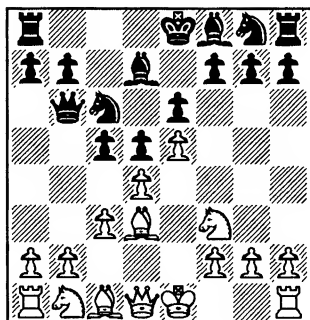
The modern Advance Variation dates from the early part of this century, specifically from the games of Nimzovich. The following he describes as "A most instructive game from A to Z, one which I regard as the first in which my new philosophy of the center was exhibited."

Nimzovich-Salwe, Karlsbad 1911

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5
4 c3	Nc6
5 Nf3	Qb6

6 Bd3

Bd7?



This natural move is actually a serious error, which Nimzovich punishes in spectacular fashion. In the post-mortems, Nimzovich's contemporaries had difficulty explaining White's convincing victory. After all, Black had played the opening exactly as the books said he should.

Eventually, the theoreticians concluded that Black had only made an error of omission. He should have played 6...cxd4 first. After 7 cxd4, **Bd7!** White's d-pawn would be threatened and there would be no convenient defense of it (8 Be3, Qxb2; 8 Bc2, Nb4 9 Bb3, Bb5).

7 dxc5!

Bxc5

A modern finesse, which works in many similar positions, is 7...Qc7, threatening the e-pawn. After 8 Bf4, **Bxc5** 9 0-0, Nge7, however, White can play 10 b4, Bb6 11 a4 with an excellent game.

Nimzovich's comment on Black's next move is typically emphatic:

"Black swells in triumph and throws himself hungrily on the last remaining member of the once so proud chain-family, to destroy him. His war cry is 'Room for the e-pawn!' But it happens quite otherwise."

8 0-0

f6

9 b4!

Be7

10 Bf4

fxe5

11 Nxe5

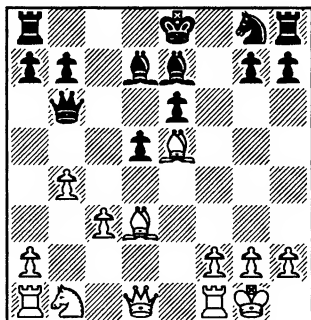
Nxe5

12 Bxe5

(See following diagram)

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White's center strategy is now clear: the pawn wedge White established with his first three moves has now been dissolved. In its place he has two excellent outpost squares, at **d4** and **e5**, for his minor pieces.



The **c3** pawn is backward and on a half-open file, a classically "weak pawn." But unless it can be attacked by a Black minor piece, it is far from weak.

Meanwhile, Black's pawns at **d5** and **e6** may favor him if allowed to advance. But on their current squares they are more of an obstruction.

Take note of White's next series of moves, each one designed to overprotect the **d4** and **e5** squares.

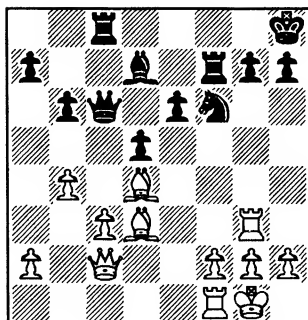
12 ...	Nf6
13 Nd2	0-0
14 Nf3	Bd6
15 Qe2!	

Releasing the occupation is risky, even for a move: **15 Bd4** allows **15...Qc7 16 Qe2, Ng4! 17 h3, e5!** and Black turns the tables. As Nimzovich once put it, "The main thing is they, the enemy pawns, should be cramped."

15 ...	Rac8
16 Bd4	Qc7
17 Ne5	Be8
18 Rae1	Bxe5
19 Bxe5	Qc6
20 Bd4	Bd7
21 Qc2	Rf7
22 Re3	b6

23 Rg3

Kh8



24 Bxh7!

Now 24...Nxb7 25 Qg6 is quite lost. The rest of the game was instructive only in the technical sense.

24 ...	e5
25 Bg6!	Re7
26 Re1	Qd6
27 Be3	d4
28 Bg5	Rxc3
29 Rxc3	dx3
30 Qxc3	Kg8
31 a3	Kf8
32 Bh4	Be8
33 Bf5	Qd4
34 Qxd4	exd4
35 Rxe7	Kxe7
36 Bd3	Kd6
37 Bxf6	gxf6
38 h4	Black Resigns

This game was widely reprinted in the years before World War I. But a remarkable thing happened: Instead of recognizing a new strategy in White's play, many annotators concluded that Black's defeat was unique to a specific position of the opening. White was only exploiting a transpositional error by Black, at move six, they said.

The possibility that White could play **dx5!** followed by **b2-b4** and the occupation of **d4** in other variations of the Advance French was not explored until ...the 1970's.

This strategy then began to appear prominently in the games of Evgeny Sveschnikov, Siberian grandmaster. One early example from another opening entirely:

Sveschnikov-Savon, Lvov 1978

1 e4	c5
2 c3	e6
3 d4	d5
4 e5!	

One reason for the considerable experimentation with the Advance French in the past two decades is that Alapin's **2 c3** had come into fashion against the Sicilian in the mid-1970's and White needed a satisfactory method of meeting **2...e6**. Once the strength of **3 d4, d5 4 e5** was evaluated, it gave impetus to reaching the same position via the French.

4 ...	Nc6
5 Nf3	Bd7
6 dxc5	

Given a dubious designation ("?!") by Black in the *Informant*, this move today seems best. The move seems downright illogical, since with his first four moves White has built a pawn chain and then proceeds to disassemble it.

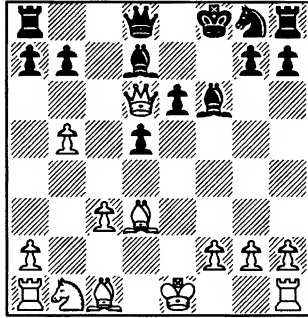
Further, when White captures on **c5** and follows up with a quick **b2-b4-b5** he ruins his queenside pawn structure. But he gains a huge amount of developmental time, which he can well put to his advantage. Although this theme had occurred in Nimzovich's games, we'll call this the Sveschnikov Strategy.

6 ...	Bxc5
7 Bd3	f6
8 b4	Be7
9 b5!	

Now **9...Na5 10 Qc2!, fxe5 11 Nxe5, Nf6?** allows the strong bishop check. Sveschnikov later refined White's play by advancing the b-pawn at move 7 and 8.

9 ...	Nxe5
10 Nxe5	fxe5

11 Qh5ch Kf8
 12 Qxe5 Bf6
 13 Qd6ch?



The queen does little good here. White should have retreated the queen to **g3** where it supports **Bg5**. Now we see the consequences of what happens when Black is allowed to push the dreaded e-pawn.

13 ... Ne7
 14 0-0 e5!
 15 Ba3 Kf7!
 16 Nd2 Re8
 17 Rad1? Bg4!
 18 Qxd8 Raxd8
 19 f3 Be6
 20 c4 Nf5!
 21 cxd5 Rxd5

And with control of the d-file and the use of the **d4** outpost for the knight, Black is better. It was only through his endgame carelessness that White managed to achieve a draw. Nevertheless, this game illustrates the strengths and weaknesses of a new strategy that soon began to appear in a variety of Advance French positions.

THE BASIC OUTLINES OF WHITE'S STRATEGY

(1) White, after **3 e5**, has a spatial advantage on the kingside as well as a closed center. This invites him to attack, either with minor pieces or pawns (See in particular Illustrative Games 4-5). In most cases a spatial advantage is more important than White's bad dark-squared bishop.

(2) Because of the consequences of **3 e5**, Black must attack and his targets include **d4** and the entire queenside. Generally the opening of the queenside should favor Black -- although he must also control the lines thus opened (See Illustrative Game 3 for a prematurely opened queenside).

(3) White must decide whether to maintain a solid center, with units at **d4** and **e5**, or to exchange off one or both pawns in the Nimzovich or Sveschnikov manners.

(4) Although we tend to think that in closed positions, the element of time and superior development are devaluated, there are many occasions in the system we will outline in which superior development overcomes strategic weaknesses. See, in particular, Game 14.

We will be examining our anti-French System in this order:

Chapter One: Main Line Introduction -- **1 e4, e6 2 d4, d5 3 e5, c5 4 c3, Nc6 5 Nf3, Qb6 6 Be2**

Chapter Two: Main Line II (**6...cxd4/7...Nh6**).

Chapter Three: The Elastic **5...Bd7**

Chapter Four: The Modern **5...Nge7**

Chapter Five: The Wade Finesse, **4...Qb6**

Chapter Six: Maneuver with **4...Ne7**

Chapter Seven: Other Defenses

THE MAIN LINE

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5

With this move Black begins the traditional assault on the base of the pawn chain (*d4*). It is this point that is the usual Black target in the early going.

Nimzovich used military terminology to explain why Black goes after *d4* and not *e5*: "If we wished to sap a building, we should not begin with architectural ornaments, but we should blow up its foundations, for then the destruction of the ornaments with all the rest will automatically follow."

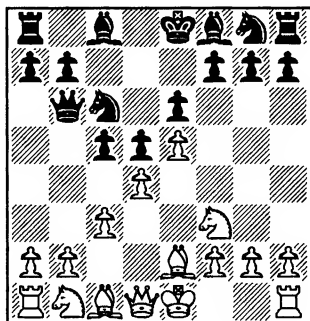
For a survey of the alternatives at move three, see Chapter Seven.

4 c3	Nc6
5 Nf3	

Since Black's attention should be directed against the center, his queen usually ends up on *b6* or *c7*. There is some point to *5...Qa5*, inasmuch as it prepares *6...cxd4*, when the White c-pawn is pinned. However, the *6 dxc5!* idea is quite effective, since *6...Bxc5* allows a pawn fork at *b4*. See Illustrative Game 1.

5 ...	Qb6
6 Be2	

A variety of other moves have come into theoretical fashion, including *6 a3*, an idea dating back to Howard Staunton, which prepares to gain a valuable queenside turn with *7 b4*, and *6 Bd3*, which prepares to sacrifice the *d4* pawn. Our move, however, offers the greatest chance of maintaining the initiative -- and at the slightest cost.



Black has some serious choices to make:

- (a) 6...Nge7
- (b) 6...Bd7
- (c) 6...f6
- (d) 6...Nh6

For Black's best move, 6...cxd4!, see Chapter Two. This move deserved a chapter of its own. In some of these lines we will be able to use the Sveschnikov Strategy, in others we will have to try something else.

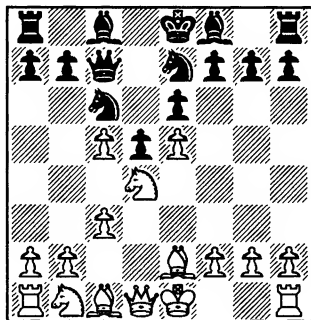
(a) 6 ... Nge7
 (After 1 e4, e6 2 d4, d5 3 e5, c5 4 c3, Nc6 5 Nf3, Qb6 6 Be2)

Black prepares to attack d4 (7 0-0?, cxd4 8 cxd4, Nf5 and the d-pawn dies under the worst circumstances). But 6...Nge7 is inexact because it allows us to use the Sveschnikov Strategy under optimum conditions.

7 dxc5! Qc7

What makes this a particularly good version of the dxc5 strategy is that Black cannot immediately recapture on c5 with his f8-bishop. If he retakes with his queen, White gains too much time: 7...Qxc5 8 b4!, Qb6 9 b5! and Ba3.

8 Nd4!



The threat is a devastating 9 Nb5! Black is lost immediately after 8...Nxe5 9 Nb5, Qxc5 10 Qd4!, an old trap.

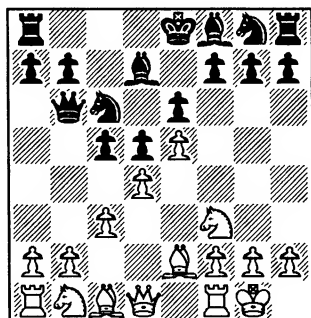
8 ... Qxe5
 9 0-0

Now if Black just had the benefit of three or four free moves (...*Qc7*, ...*Ng6*, ...*e6-e5*) he would have a fine game. But in a semi-open position, the absence of those moves is bound to cost. Now 9...*Ng6* 10 *b4*, *Be7* 11 *f4* and 12 *f5* or 9...*Nf5* 10 *Nxf5*, *Qxf5* 11 *b4* offer White excellent prospects.

(b) 6 ... *Bd7*
 (After 1 *e4*, *e6* 2 *d4*, *d5* 3 *e5*, *c5* 4 *c3*, *Nc6* 5 *Nf3*, *Qb6* 6 *Be2*)

This move enables Black to mobilize his queenside pieces quickly, with ...*Rc8* or even ...*0-0-0*. At the same time it delays an attack on *d4* -- and thereby invites the *dx5* idea.

7 0-0



7 ... 0-0-0

On 7...*Rc8* White would have everything in place for 8 *dx5!*, *Bxc5*?! (8...*Qc7!* 9 *Bf4*, *Bxc5* 10 *b4* is slightly better) 9 *b4* with a fine version of the Sveschnikov plan: 9...*Bf8* 10 *Na3*, *Qc7* 11 *Nb5*, *Qb8* 12 *Bf4* and now 12...*Nf6*?! 13 *Nfd4*, *Nxe5* 14 *Nxa7!* led to a winning game in Antoshin-Bannik, USSR 1955.

Also good is 10 *Bd3*, *Nge7* 11 *Bf4*, *Bg6* 12 *Bg3*, *Be7* 13 *h4!* as in Castro-Korchnoi, Linares 1979.

Black could avoid much of this White piece activity by playing 7...*cx4* 8 *cx4* first. Then 8...*Rc8* looks dangerous, but 9 *Nc3!* plugs up the c-file just in time. In theory, Black has the edge on the queenside because of the preponderance of his pieces in that sector. But White, with *Na4-c5* and *a2-a3* followed by *b2-b4-b5*, has equally promising chances on the queenside.

Note also, that on **7...cxd4 8 cxd4, Nge7 9 Nc3, Nf5** we have a position reminiscent of our main line -- see subsection (e). However, the insertion of **6...Bd7** has cost Black a useful tempo and White can beat off the attack on **d4** with **10 Na4!**, **Qa5 11 Bd2, Bb4 12 Bxb4, Nxb4 13 Nc5** or **10...Qc8 11 Bf4** and **12 Rc1**.

8 Na3

White can also try **8 dxc5, Bxc5 9 b4**. For example, **9...Be7 10 Na3** threatens **11 Be3, Qc7 12 Nb5**.

8 ... cxd4

9 cxd4 Kb8

Black anticipates an attack along the c-file.

10 Nc2 Rc8

11 Rb1!

And White gets to push the b-pawn without dissolving his center. Now **11...Nh6 12 b4!** (Zlotnik-Damsky, Dubna 1968) is a sham sacrifice because of **13 a3**. With **13 b5** coming and no Black counterplay impending, White has the middlegame well in hand.

(c) 6 ... f6

(After **1 e4, e6 2 d4, d5 3 e5, c5 4 c3, Nc6 5 Nf3, Qb6 6 Be2**)

This indicates a mixed signal from Black: he is attacking **d4** with his fifth move and then shifts to **e5** with his sixth. As we'll see in Chapter Three, it makes more sense for Black to play **5...Bd7** if he has this in mind, so that after **6 Be2, f6** he can later play **...Qc7**.

7 0-0

Yes, **7 exf6** may grant White a nice outpost square at **e5** but it gives Black too easy a development (**7...Nxf6, 8...Bd6, 9...0-0**). White should make Black work for his king safety.

7 ... fxe5

8 Nxe5!

Forcing (**9 Bh5ch**) a favorable exchange of knights. Now the **b1**-knight can join the action.

8 ... Nxe5

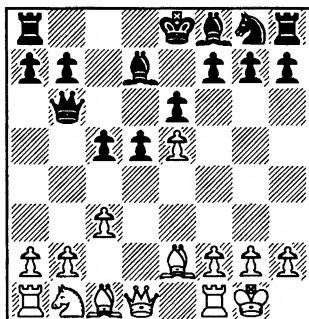
9 dxe5 Bd7

(See following diagram)

10 c4!

This idea has been attributed to Igor Zaitsev, longtime second to Anatoly Karpov, who first played it in 1977 in a similar position. With the queen

somewhat misplaced on b6 Black is unable after 10 c4 to properly defend the attacked d-pawn.



Previously White would reinforce e5 with moves such as 10 Nd2, Ne7 11 Nf3, Nc6. Then Medyanikova-Chiburdanidze, Frunze 1975 went 12 Qc2, Be7 13 Bf4, 0-0-0 14 b4! with good attacking chances.

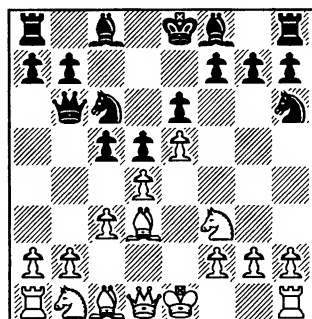
After 10 c4 Black must make some concession in the center. Clearly 10...dxc4?! will leave his e6 pawn as a cripple. But after 10...d4 11 Nd2 and Ne4/Bf3 White has excellent prospects. Similarly 10...Ne7 11 Nc3, Bc6 12 Bg4 is good for White.

(d) 6 ... Nh6

(After 1 e4, e6 2 d4, d5 3 e5, c5 4 c3, Nc6 5 Nf3, Qb6 6 Be2)

This odd-looking move has been the subject of considerable analysis because of the sacrificial possibility 7 Bxh6!, Qxb2?! 8 Be3!, Qxa1 9 Qc2. However, Black does better with the simple recapture, 7...gxh6 followed by ...Bg7 and ...0-0.

7 Bd3!



A surprising choice: White loses a tempo with the bishop in order to meet 7...cxd4 8 cxd4, Nf5 with 9 Bxf5. However, the loss of time is not serious because of the semi-closed nature of the position and Black's inability to exploit any open lines immediately.

The move 7 Bd3 has so far eluded serious attention but has appeared in several games in the last few years by young American players, including GM Alex Fishbein, whose father, Gregory, appears to hold the patent on 7 Bd3.

7 ... cxd4
8 cxd4

Of course, 8...Nxd4?? loses a piece since 9 Nxd4, Qxd4?? 10 Bb5ch wins the queen.

8 ... Nf5

Another key point in this Fishbein Variation is revealed in 8...Bd7 (threatening 9...Nxd4) 9 Bc2!, Nb4 10 Bxh6, gxh6 11 0-0 after which White, turning over both of his bishops for knights, will obtain a solid center and attacking chances on both wings. See Illustrative Game 2.

Similarly 8...Nb4 9 Bxh6, gxh6 10 0-0. This is better than 9 0-0, Nxd3 10 Qxd3, Bd7 11 Nc3, Nf5 which allows Black's h6 knight a normal life -- although White still stands a bit better after 12 g4, Ne7 as in Edelman-Handley, Lloyds 1988.

9 Bxf5

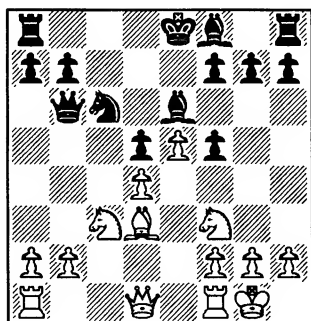
The entire point of White's play. Note that on 8...Bd7 9 Bc2, Nf5 10 Bxf5 Black would have gained a tempo (...Bd7) on our main line. But since Black is virtually committed to defending his d5 and f7 points by way of ...Be6, this tempo will be lost back and we will transpose exactly back into the main line.

9 ... exf5
10 0-0 Be6
11 Nc3

(See following diagram)

An important benefit of White's play is that his b1-knight can be developed here, rather than at d2, and therefore can go in some cases to a4 and in others to f4, via e2.

11 ... h6



To prevent 12 Ng5 as well as to threaten ...g7-g5 in connection with queenside castling. If Black insists on kingside castling, White will use the g5 square for minor pieces (11...Be7 12 Na4, Qc7 13 Bg5).

12 h4

A typical restrictive move to hold up Black on the kingside and prepare Ne2-f4. If now 12...Be7 13 Ne2!, 0-0-0 White should not encourage 13 Nf4, g5! but rather begin queenside operations with 14 Rb1 and 15 b4, even as a pawn sacrifice.

One recent game, Benjamin-Edelman, New York 1992, went 14 Rb1, g5?! 15 hxg5, hxg5 16 Bxg5!, Bxg5 17 Nxb5 and Black's attack was insufficient after 17...Kb8 18 Kf2!, Bd7 19 Qb3, Qa6 20 Ng3 and 21 Rh1.

For the best sixth move for Black, 6...cxd4!, see the next chapter.

ILLUSTRATIVE GAMES

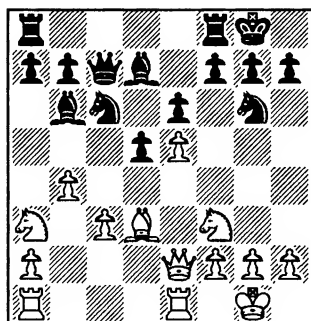
(1) Gonsioer-Kubien, Wroclaw 1975

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5
4 c3	Nc6
5 Nf3	Qa5?!
6 dxc5!	Qc7

Better than 6...Qxc5 7 b4, Qb6 8 Bd3. Now the threat of 7...Nxe5 allows Black to retake on c5 with the bishop.

7 Bb5	Bxc5
8 0-0	Bd7?!
9 Qe2	Nge7

10 b4!	Bb6
11 Bd3	Ng6
12 Re1	0-0
13 Na3	



"But isn't the c3-pawn hopelessly weak now?," the theoretical authorities said of such positions before 1975. Yes, the b2-b4 thrust has done severe damage to White's queenside pawn structure. But it has also gained valuable space, which now allows White to play on both wings. White can, in fact, offer the c-pawn as a gambit.

13 ...	a6
14 Nc2	Na7
15 a4!	Qxc3
16 Ra3	Qc8
17 h4	

Black is a pawn ahead but his pieces are on poor squares. His plan of ...Bb5 was stopped by White's 15th move and he now faces the danger of 18 h5 and 19 h6 (or 18 Ng5 and 19 Qh5) on the other wing.

17 ...	f5
18 exf6	gxf6?
19 Qd2!	

Heading for h6. For better or worse, Black had to retake with his rook on f6 last move. The rest of the game consists of the inevitable sacrifice.

19 ...	Qe8
20 h5	Ne7
21 Bxh7ch!	Kxh7
22 Qh6ch	Kg8
23 Nh4!	Qb8

Hoping to give up the queen (*24 Rg3ch, Qxg3*) and last to move 35.

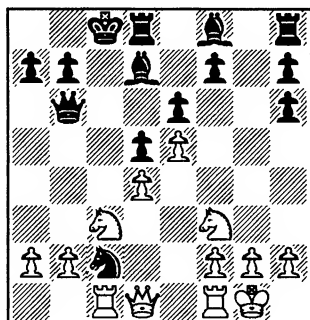
24 Bf4!	e5
25 Ng6!	Nf5
26 Qh8ch	Kf7
27 Qh7ch	Ke6
28 g4	Black Resigns

(2) Fishbein-Ostenstad, Stavanger 1991

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5
4 c3	Nc6
5 Nf3	Qb6
6 Be2	Nh6

This move was still played a lot because until fairly recently it was endorsed by almost all "book".

7 Bd3	cxd4
8 cxd4	Bd7
9 Bc2	Nb4
10 Bxh6	gxh6
11 0-0	0-0-0
12 Nc3	Nxc2
13 Rc1!	



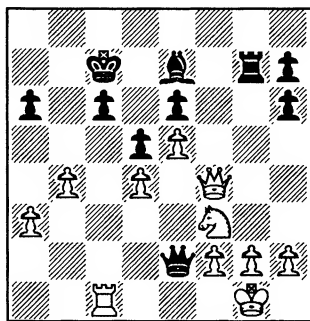
A neat gain of time. White wants his rook on the c-file (*13...N-moves 14 Nxd5ch*) and his knights on the kingside.

13 ...	Kb8
14 Rxc2	Rg8

15 Qd2	Bc6
16 Ne2	Qa6
17 a3	Bb5
18 Re1	Be7
19 Ng3	Rg6
20 Rec1	Bc6
21 Qf4	Rf8
22 Nh5	

It's remarkable how little scope the bishops have compared with the knights. White will now strengthen his position, if allowed, with Nf6 and g2-g3. But a blunder shortens the game.

22 ...	Qd3
23 Nf6	a6?
24 Rc3	Qe2
25 Rxc6!	bxc6
26 Nd7ch	Kc7
27 Nxf8	Rg7
28 Nxe6ch	fxe6
29 b4	



With numerous remaining weaknesses, at a6, c6, e6, and h7, Black might consider himself fortunate to trade down to a lost endgame.

29 ...	Qd3
30 Qxh6!	Rg6
31 Qe3	Qxe3
32 fxe3	Rg8
33 Nd2	a5
34 bxa5	Bxa3

35 Rf1	Rg7
36 Nb3	Kb7
37 Ra1	Bb4
38 a6ch	Ka7
39 Ra4	Bf8
40 Na5	Rc7
41 Nb7	

Now there is nothing else to stop the triumphant advance of the White king.

41 ...	Rc8
42 Kf2	Be7
43 Ke2	Rg8
44 g3	h5
45 Ra1	h4
46 gxh4	Rg2ch
47 Kf3	Rxh2
48 Na5	Rc2
49 h5	Bf8
50 Nb7	Rc3
51 Nd6	Black Resigns

CHAPTER TWO: Main Line (6...cxd4/7...Nh6)

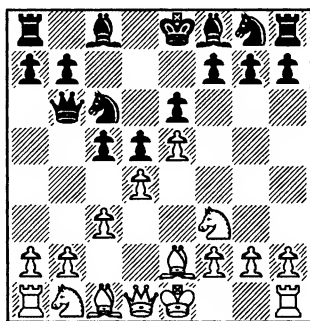
We now turn to the critical theory-endorsed answer to the Advance Variation.

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5
4 c3	Nc6

For no apparent reason you will sometimes see 4...a6?! played here but it doesn't really fit into any plan of development. White should simply continue 5 Nf3, Nc6 6 Bd3, since 6...Qb6 7 0-0, cxd4 8 cxd4, Bd7 allows White to defend his d-pawn with 9 Bc2.

And 6...f5 7 exf6, Nxf6 8 0-0 followed by Re1 must favor White slightly (8...Bd6 9 Re1, cxd4 10 cxd4, Qc7 11 Nc3, Bielczyk-Joksic, Zabrze 1977).

5 Nf3	Qb6
6 Be2	



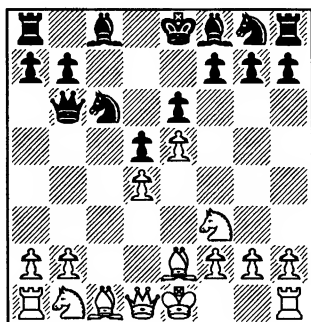
6 ... cxd4!

This exchange is now regarded as most exact because it eliminates all dangers resulting from dxc5 and in some key lines provides Black with a crucial ...Bb4ch.

7 cxd4

Black should now launch his attack on the only real White target -- the d4-pawn -- and quickly. Otherwise, the edge in space conferred by the e5-pawn gives White too much play, e.g. 7...Bd7 8 Nc3, Nh6 9 a3, Nf5 10 Na4!, Qd8 11 h4, Be7 12 h5!, Rc8 13 g4! (Heubner-Duckstein, Claire Benedict 1972).

Historically, the insufficiency of quiet play by Black was shown by Reti-Spielmann, Vienna 1928 (Illustrative Game 3). Black opened the c-file for his pieces -- and ended up losing because of White's control of that line.

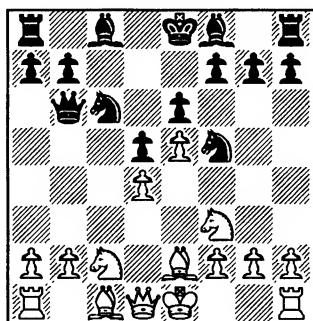


7 ... Nh6

Now regarded as best. The prime alternative is 7...Nge7, which has the same 8...Nf5 objective but some drawbacks.

If White then continues 8 Nc3 it won't matter which seventh move Black chooses. However, there is a subtle but significant difference between the two knight moves. After 7...Nge7 White can try 8 Na3! with the idea of 8...Nf5 9 Nc2 (In contrast, 7...Nh6 8 Na3, Bxa3! and 9...Nf5 favors Black).

After 7...Nge7 8 Na3, Nf5 9 Nc2 the key b4 square is covered.



Then (1) 9...Nb4 10 Nxb4, Bxb4ch 11 Bd2, Bxd2ch only leads to a better endgame for White.

Or (2) 9...Bb4ch forces 10 Kf1 but that is a good move here. White then threatens 11 g4 (11...Nge7 12 a3 traps the bishop) and ensures that he will

be able to push the other knight-pawn effectively. After **10...Be7 11 b4!** the pawn cannot be taken because of **12 Rb1** and this ensures White a slight edge after **11...Bd7 12 a3** followed by **h2-h4-h5** (or, after ...*h7-h5*, by *Bg5*).

Or (3) More enterprising is **9...Nb4 10 Ne3!?** and then **10...Nxe3 11 Bxe3, Nc6! 12 0-0**, sacrificing the b-pawn (*12...Qxb2 13 a4* followed by *Rb1*). If Black does not go pawn-grabbing, White's spatial edge remains prohibitively large. For example, **11...Be7** (instead of *11...Nc6*) **12 0-0, 0-0 13 a3, Nc6 14 b4, Bd7 15 Bd3, a6 16 Rc1, Na7? 17 Ng5!, Bxg5 18 Bxg5, Bb5 19 Rc3!, Nc6 20 Bxh7ch!** and in Soltis-Polyakin, New York 1993, Black resigned in view of **20...Kxh7 21 Rh3ch, Kg8 22 Bf6!** and mates. Not much better was **19...Bxd3 20 Rxd3** followed by **Bf6!** and **Rg3**.

8 Nc3

It is not essential for White to beat off the impending attack on **d4** in time. Occasionally **8 b3, Nf5 9 Bb2** has been tried but ...*f6* always seems to come too quickly, e.g. **9...Be7 10 0-0, Bd7 11 g4, Nh4 12 Nxh4, Bxh4 13 Na3, 0-0 14 f4, f6** as in a brutal 1992 loss by Viktor Kupreychik, one of the world's experts on the Advance Variation.

And naturally not **8 Bxh6, Qxb2!**

8 ... Nf5
9 Na4

This first gained attention in the game Steinitz-Maroczy, Vienna 1898 which continued **9...Qa5ch 10 Kf1!?** after which **10...b5!** helps Black too much.

9 ... Qa5ch

As indicated by Illustrative Game 3, Black must try to inflict some damage on White's development or the enemy's superior center will assert itself. Here **9...Qd8 10 0-0, Bd7 11 a3, a5 12 Bf4** leaves White with the usual space advantage.

Note that **9...Bb4ch 10 Bd2, Qa5** leads back into the main line by way of transposition.

10 Bd2! Bb4
11 Bc3

A key position arises. When this occurred in the 1934 Nimzovich-Stahlberg match Black simplified with **11...Bxc3ch 12 Nxc3, Qb6** (not *12...Qb4 13 a3!*, *Qxb2?* *14 Na4!*) and he appeared to stand well because of the renewed attack on **d4**.

However, Nimzovich's **13 Bb5!** turned out to be more than the act of a desperate player. Play continued **13...0-0 14 Bxc6, Qxb2 15 Na4, Qb4ch 16 Qd2!, Qxd2ch 17 Kxd2**. And although the players agreed to a draw immediately after **17...bxc6 18 Nc5**, White stands better despite his pawn minus (check it out on your own).

Better after **13 Bb5** is **13...Bd7 14 Bxc6, Bxc6 15 Qd2** with play akin to our main line but with an extra pair of pawns on the board. For example, **15...0-0 16 0-0, a5 17 Rfe1, Rfc8 18 g4!, Ne7 19 Nh4, Bd7 20 f4** with a burgeoning kingside expansion (Hennings-Knaak, Leipzig 1981). Mohring suggests **15...Bb5 16 Nxb5, Qxb5** is the way to equality but perhaps **16 0-0-0!?** is better.

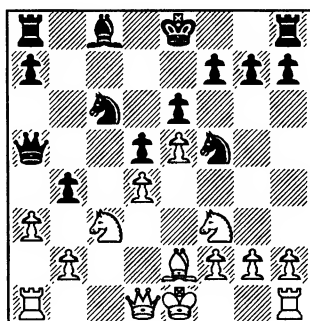
Also note that White gets to keep his good bishop -- but remove his bad one -- if Black plays the quiet **11...Bd7?! 12 a3!** or **11...a6 12 0-0, b5 13 Nc5!** with advantage, because of **13...Bxc3 14 Nb3!, Qb4 15 bxc3, Qxc3?? 16 Rc1**.

11 ... b5!

This forcing move pushes White into some exchanges he might otherwise want to avoid.

12 a3! Bxc3ch
13 Nxc3 b4

Clearly, Black does not want to leave his remaining bishop hemmed in by this pawn (**13...a6? 14 b4!**).



14 axb4

This has been an automatic capture but one wonders why **14 Nb5!?** hasn't been tried. On **14...bxa3ch 15 Kf1** White has a nice **16 Rxa3** or **16 g4** coming up.

14 ... Qxb4

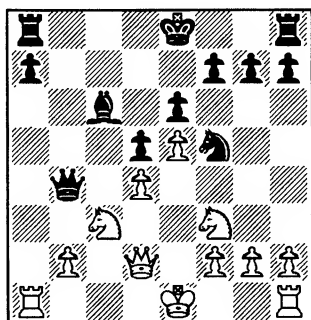
15 Bb5

White should be reluctant to give up this piece but he must seek a different kind of middlegame. Instead of a slashing minor-piece attack directed at h7, he accepts a double-edged situation in which both sides have queenside weaknesses. But White still has prospects on the kingside because of his ability to expand there with h2-h4-h5 and g2-g4.

15 ... Bd7

16 Bxc6 Bxc6

17 Qd2



At the end of a long and relatively forced series of moves we have reached a stem position. The book authorities universally declare this position even or better for Black. But is it?

(a) 17...0-0 allows White to follow suit -- 18 0-0, Rfb8 and now Purdy claims an edge for Black after 19 Rab1, a5 although 20 g4, Ne7 21 Ng5 is not a trivial attacking idea (22 Qf4 or 22 f4).

Watson regards 19...Qe7 as better so that Black can meet 20 g4 with 20...Nh4 (21 Ne1, Rb3 22 f4, Rab8 23 Qf2, Bb5). But once Black starts retreating on the queenside, White can demonstrate that he has chances there also -- 19...Qe7 20 b4, Rb6 (20...Rxb4?? 21 Nxd5!) 21 b5, Be8 22 Qa2 or 20...Bb5 21 Rfc1, Bc4 22 Na4 and 23 Nc5.

Illustrative Game 4 (at the end of the chapter) will see White defend the b-pawn with his other rook (19 Rfb1) after which 19...Bb5 allowed him to begin kingside operations -- 20 g4!, Ne7 21 Ng5, h6 22 Nf3 and 23 h4.

(b) The immediate 17...Bb5, stopping White from castling, has been tried recently, with 18 Nxb5, Qxb5 19 Ra5 to follow.

Then 19...Qb6 20 0-0 led to a good position for White in Illustrative Game 5 because of the same expansion -- 20...0-0 21 Rc1, Rab8 22 Rc2, h6 23 Rac5, Rb7 and now 24 g4!, Ne7 25 h4.

What about the persistent 19...Qc4? Then 20 Rc5, Qa6 21 Ra5 gets nowhere but 20 Qc3!? might favor White, particularly after 20...Qxc3ch?.

ILLUSTRATIVE GAMES

(3) Reti-Spielmann, Vienna 1928

There had been previous Advance French games which showed that the e5-pawn was a stronger asset than the d4-pawn was a weakness. But this game illuminated that message in an influential manner. It also showed how White was not limited to kingside attacks in the Advance Variation.

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5
4 c3	Nc6
5 Nf3	Qb6
6 Be2	cxd4
7 cxd4	Bd7?!
8 0-0	Nge7
9 Nc3	Nf5
10 Na4!	

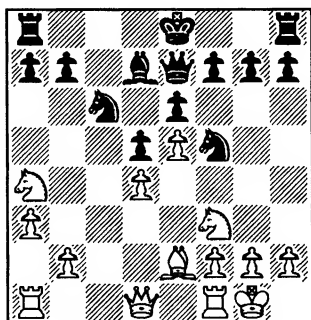
Just in time to beat off the attack on the d-pawn. Had Black not dilly-dallied at move seven he would be able to deliver an effective check now.

On 10...Qd8 White would likely kick the queen with 11 Bg5, since 11...Be7 12 Bxe7, Qxe7 13 Rc1 and 14 Nc5 solves all of White's problems and leaves him with a comfortable positional advantage. In fact, that is just about what happens in the game.

10 ...	Qa5
11 Bd2	Bb4
12 Bxb4	Qxb4
13 a3	Qe7

(See following diagram)

White's superiority is manifest -- better bishop, lead in development, control of the queenside (which is supposedly "Black's wing"). Now with a few careful moves -- such as avoiding 14 Nc5?, Nxd4 15 Nxd4, Qxc5 -- he can begin a somewhat unusual queenside attack.



14 Rc1	0-0
15 Nc5	b6
16 Nxd7	Qxd7
17 Bb5!	Nfe7
18 Qd3	

This last move gains a crucial tempo for the doubling of rooks on the c-file and also stops the breaking of the bishop pin with 18...a6. Now Black must take time out to deal with 19 Ng5!

18 ...	h6
19 Rc3!	a5

Or 19...Rfc8 20 Rfc1, Qb7?! 21 Ba6.

20 Rfc1	Rfc8
21 Qc2!	Black Resigns

The final position resembles another Nimzovich game, but one he would have preferred to forget -- Nimzo's celebrated loss to Alexander Alekhine in a Winawer French at San Remo 1930.

(4) Epstein-Saunina, Tbilisi 1976

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5
4 c3	Nc6
5 Nf3	Qb6

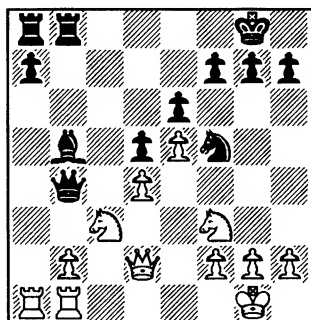
6 Be2

The position with 6 **Bd3** is quite old. After 6...**Bd7**?! 7 **dx**c5, **B**xc5 we have Lowe-Kennedy, match 1849 (!), which Howard Staunton, then the world's best player, considered favorable for Black -- so much so that he sometimes gave White's third move a question mark.

6 ...	c xd4
7 c xd4	N h6
8 N c3	N f5
9 N a4	B b4ch

The position after White's 17th move has occurred so often in master games in the past that one can imagine the two players taking less than ten minutes to reach it.

10 B d2	Q a5
11 B c3	b 5
12 a 3	B xc3ch
13 N xc3	b 4
14 a xb4	Q xb4
15 B b5	B d7
16 B xc6	B xc6
17 Q d2	0-0
18 0-0	R fb8
19 R fb1	B b5

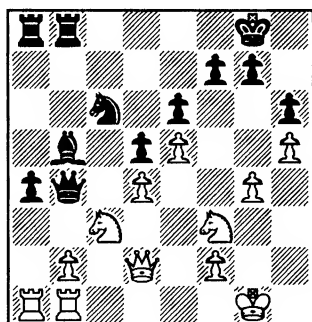


With this maneuver, Black is trying to bring his "bad" bishop into an effective middlegame role, either at **c4** where it stops **Ra2**, or on **b3**. The chief drawback is that this leaves Black seriously undermanned on the other wing.

20 g 4!	N e7
21 N g5	h 6

This gives White a way of forcing open kingside lines. Black probably did not relish the idea of 21...Be8, to anticipate 22 Qf4, or 21...Ng6, to await 22 Qc2.

22 Nf3	Nc6
23 h4!	a5
24 h5	a4



Black appears to be a move or two away from breaking through -- with 25...Bc4 and 26...a3. And White can't push the g-pawn without losing the d-pawn. Or can he?

25 g5!	hxg5
26 Qxg5	Nxd4
27 Nxd4	Qxd4
28 h6	g6
29 Rd1	Qc5
30 h7ch!	

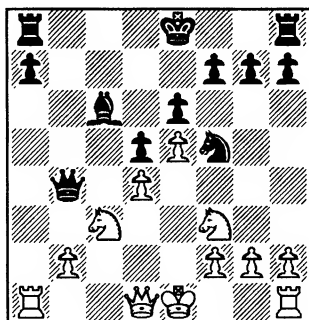
This clears the h-file for heavy pieces.

30 ...	Kxh7
31 Kg2	Kg8
32 Rh1	Qf8
33 Rh6	d4
34 Rah1	Qg7
35 Qf6!	

Nice. Trading queens will set up an unstoppable Rh8 mate.

35 ...	Bc6ch
36 f3	Bxf3ch
37 Kxf3	Black forfeits

(5) Nunn-Schmittziel, Dortmund 1991
 (First 16 moves the same as the previous game)



17 Qd2 Bb5

18 Nxb5

The endgame after 18 Na4, Qxd2ch 19 Kxd2 is another idea.

18 ... Qxb5

19 Ra5 Qb6?!

20 0-0 0-0

21 Rc1!

If White piles up on the a7 pawn (21 Rfa1) the best he can realistically hope for is an exchange of queenside pawns and a trade of queens that will likely leave Black -- with d4 as a target -- with the better chances.

The text leaves matters in the middlegame. Black probably does best to trade off both pairs of rooks, rather than leave the c-file in White's hands.

21 ... Rab8

22 Rc2 h6?

23 Rac5 Rb7

24 g4! Ne7

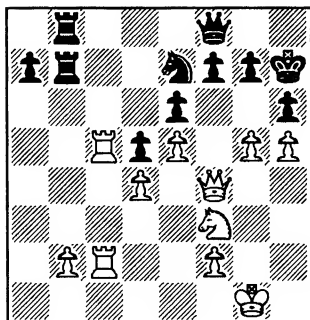
25 h4

White does not need the Ng5 adventure of the previous game, but the absence of another minor piece limits his attacking chances. He has a similar method of penetrating the kingside, by pushing both these pawns to the fifth rank. Note that 25...f6 26 exf6, Rxf6 (26...gxh6? 27 Qxh6) 27 Ne5 increases White's piece superiority.

25 ... Rfb8

26 h5 Qd8

27 Qc1!	Qf8
28 g5	Kh7
29 Qf4	



White's winning plans include 30 Rc7 followed by 31 gxh6 or 31 g6ch.

29 ...	Nf5
30 Rc7	Qd8
31 Qc1	Rb3?
32 Rc8	Rxc8
33 Rxc8	Qa5
34 Qc6!	

There is no longer a defense to Qe8-g8 mate or 35 g6ch.

34 ...	Qa1ch
35 Kg2	Nh4ch
36 Nxh4	Black Resigns

CHAPTER THREE: The Elastic 5...Bd7

While 5...Qb6 was once a semi-automatic response by Black, it began to fall out of fashion in the 1970's. In place of the queen move, Black has been employing a variety of development systems, involving ...Bd7 and the deployment of his knights. Currently the most popular is 5...Bd7.

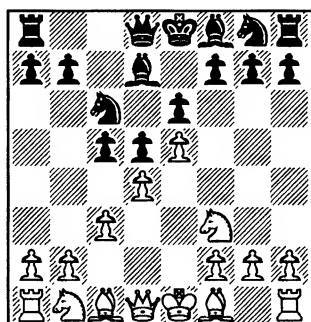
1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5
4 c3	Nc6
5 Nf3	...

White is preparing to capture on c5 after which he gains time and useful queenside terrain by b2-b4-b5. Of course, Black can prevent that with 5...cxd4 here, but after 6 cxd4 White has cleared c3 for the development of his knight.

5 ... Bd7

Gaining kingside space with 5...f5 eliminates too many of Black's resources (such as ...Ng8-e7-f5 or ...f7-f6). See Illustrative Game 7.

On the other hand, Maroczy's 5...f6 seems to attack the front of the pawn chain too early. Since White has not committed his f1-bishop he can respond 6 Bb5! e.g. 6...Bd7 7 0-0, Nxe5? 8 Nxe5, Bxb5 9 Qh5ch.



The move 5...Bd7 was analyzed by Greco circa 1620 and he concluded Black was doing fine after 6 Be3, c4 7 b3, b5. The diagrammed position was then forgotten for roughly three and a half centuries.

Then, in 1977, this flexible bishop move received instant legitimacy when

Viktor Korchnoi used it in the final candidates match of that year against Boris Spassky. Its chief value is its elasticity: ...Bd7 is virtually indispensable in the Advance French, so by inserting it at this point Black retains the options of ...Qb6 as well as ...Qc7 -- or as Korchnoi used it, of delaying any queen development at all until after the 15th move.

For example, 6 Bd3 would be an error because of 6...cxd4 7 cxd4, Qb6 and the d-pawn is under fire. And 6 Na3 invites 6...cxd4 and 7...Bxa3.

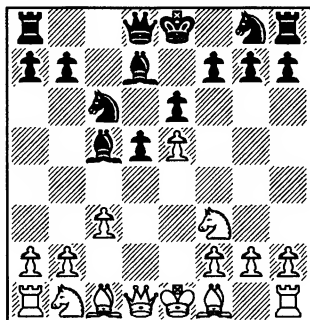
6 dxc5!

We associate this idea in general with Evgeny Sveschnikov -- and in particular in this position. The grandmaster from Chelyabinsk has won several fine games with it, although a number of others preceded him in playing 6 dxc5, including Max Euwe and P.H. Clarke.

Of course, White could continue instead with the orthodox 6 Be2, which nowadays is likely to lead to 6...f6!? 7 0-0, fxe5 8 Nxe5, Nxe5 9 dxe5 and a quick c3-c4. But the text is part of a system that is easiest to learn and consistent with our recommendations in similar positions.

6 ... Bxc5

Black gains little from inserting 6...Qc7 7 Bf4 before capturing on c5.



7 b4

Despite his 6 dxc5 predecessors, it was Sveschnikov who adopted this natural follow-up to White's sixth move. There is nothing really wrong with 7 Bd3 and then 8 b4, since it is unlikely that Black is going to spend a tempo on the preventative 7...a5.

After 7 **Bd3**, Nge7 8 **b4!** prevents the bishop from retreating along the c5-f8 diagonal. Then 8...**Bb6** 9 **b5**, Na5 10 0-0, Rc8 11 **a4**, Ng6 transposes into our main line below. Now 12 **Ba3**, **Bc5!** should be adequate for Black (Sveschnikov-Balashov, Lvov 1978) but a more attractive method of development is 12 **Re1** and on 12...f6 then 13 **Ra2!** and the rook swings into action at e2. See Illustrative Game 6.

However, if White is going to play **dx5** he should follow it up with **b2-b4**. The hazards of 7 **Bd3**, Nge7 8 **Bf4**, Ng6 9 **Bg3**, f6! are shown in Illustrative Game 8.

7 ... **Bb6**

The bishop seems to get in the way on e7. But 7...**Be7** worked out well in Sveschnikov-Ulibin, Chelyabinsk 1989 in which Black delayed kingside castling until the 24th move. Instead he concentrated on the queenside: 8 **b5**, Na5 9 **Bd3**, Qc7 10 **Bf4?**, Nc4 11 0-0, (Or 11 *a4*, Nb2!) **Bxb5** 12 **Nd4**, Nd7 13 **Qg4**, g5!?

More accurate for White is 10 **a4** so that 10...Nc4 11 0-0 leaves White well placed.

8 **b5** **Na5**
9 **Bd3** **Qc7**
10 0-0

White can delay this with 10 **Qe2**, so as to meet 10...Ne7 with **h2-h4-h5**, e.g. 10...Ne7 11 **h4**, h6 12 0-0, Rc8 13 **Bf4**, Nc4 14 **a4**, f5 15 **h5**, 0-0 and now once again the Sveschnikov rook-lift 16 **Ra2!?** (Kharlov-Kramnik, Chelyabinsk 1991, which led to a spirited draw after 16...Be8 17 **Nh4**, d4 18 **cx4**, Nd5).

Interestingly, when Sveschnikov himself had Black recently after 10 **Qe2**, he responded with 10...Nc4 11 **a4**, a6 (12 *bxa6*, *Rxa6* 13 0-0, Ne7 14 *Na3*, *Rxa4* 15 *Nxc4!?*, *dx4* 16 *Rxa4*, *Bxa4* 17 *Bxa4*, 0-0 with a quick draw, in Kharlov-Sveschnikov, Boblingen 1992).

10 ... **Ne7**
11 **a4** **Ng6**
12 **Re1**

We are following Sveschnikov-Popovic, Palma de Mallorca 1989, in which White again demonstrated his rook-lift: 12...**Bc5** 13 **Ra2!**, 0-0-0 14 **Be3**, **Bxe3** 15 **Rxe3**, f6 16 **Rae2** with good center play. For 12...f6 see Illustrative Game 6, reached by transposition.

ILLUSTRATIVE GAMES

(6) Sveschnikov-Naumkin, Moscow 1989

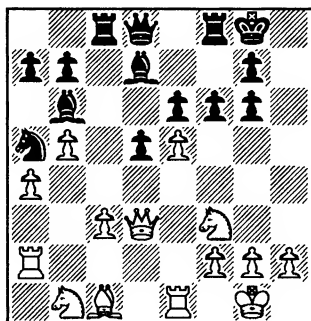
1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5
4 c3	Nc6
5 Nf3	Bd7
6 dxc5	Bxc5
7 Bd3	Nge7

We saw 7...f6 8 b4, Be7 (not 8...fxe5 9 bxc5, e4 10 Bxe4! and 11 Ng5) in the Introduction.

8 b4	Bb6
9 b5	Na5
10 0-0	Rc8
11 a4	Ng6
12 Re1	f6

Notice that White has been in no hurry to play Ba3. While that may interfere with Black's castling, it also gives f4 over to the g6-knight and may endanger the e5-pawn.

13 Ra2!	0-0
14 Bxg6!?	hxg6
15 Qd3	



White reasons that his kingside attack with h2-h4-h5 has been forestalled by 12...f6. Therefore he seeks a new plan based on the f-pawn's advance -- and finds it on g6 and e6, which are now hard to defend. Clearly, 15...f5? 16 Ng5! or 15...Be8 16 Rae2 are insufficient.

15 ...	Kf7
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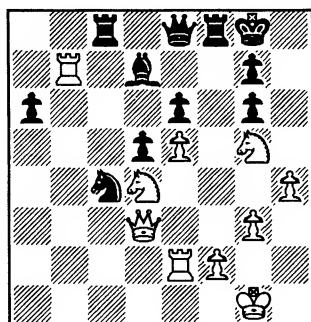
16 Be3!	Rh8
17 Rae2	Nc4
18 Bd4	Rh6
19 h4	a6!

Black finds a target of his own. After this White cannot defend both a4 and b5.

20 bxa6	bxa6
21 Nbd2!	Bxd4
22 cxd4	Rh8
23 Nb3	fxe5

This surrenders g5 but Black was more concerned about the threat to e6 that would follow 24 Nc5 and 25 exf6.

24 dxe5	Bxa4
25 Nbd4	Bd7
26 g3	Qe8
27 Rb1!	Rf8
28 Rb7	Kg8
29 Ng5	



The extra pawn is Black's only asset from here on. White's plan of h4-h5xg6 followed by Qh5-h7ch cannot be met.

29 ...	Rd8
30 f4	a5
31 h5	a4
32 Rh2	a3
33 hxg6	Rb8
34 Rxb8	Qxb8
35 Qd1!	Re8

36 Qh5	Kf8
37 Qh8ch	Ke7
38 Qxg7ch	Kd8
39 Ngxe6ch!	

Since a double capture on e6 allows a decisive Rh8ch. White finishes matters off neatly.

39 ...	Kc8
40 Rh7	Nb6
41 Nc5!	a2
42 Nxd7!	a1(Q)ch
43 Kh2	Qb2ch
44 Kh3	Qc7
45 Nxb6ch	Black Resigns

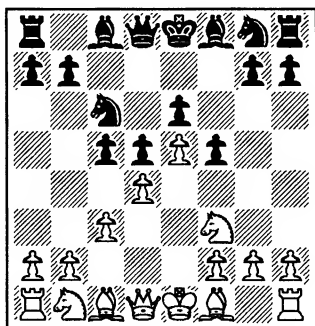
In the following Black makes a succession of early, minor errors in the apparent belief that with a closed center he can survive almost anything. He is soon proven wrong.

(7) Vasiukov-Velimirovic, Vrsac 1989

1 e4	c5
2 c3	e6
3 d4	d5
4 e5	

A French from the Sicilian? Yes, in fact this is a common method of reaching the Advance French.

4 ...	Nc6
5 Nf3	f5



This space-gaining device is useful in other French variations, including the Advance line that runs 3 e5, c5 4 Qg4, f5! when Black has secured the king's wing so he has a free hand for an effective ...cxd4. But here Black has no assurance of making a breakthrough in the center.

6 Be2 c4?

And this is just plain wrong. The closing of the queenside is a fine plan in yet another Advance variation, the one that runs 3 e5, c5 4 c3, Nc6 5 Nf3, Qb6 6 a3, c4!. Then a subsequent bid to break the queenside bind with b2-b3 by White will allow Black to create several queenside holes with ...cxb3. Here, however, White can then respond axb3, retaining pawn control of c4.

7 b3! cxb3

8 axb3 Be7

9 h4 Nh6?

And this enables White to take the enemy kingside apart with a wrench.

10 Bxh6 gxh6

11 Qc1 Qb6

12 Qxh6 Qxb3

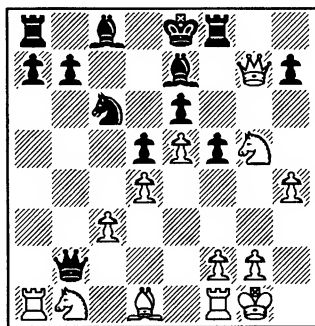
13 Qg7 Rf8

14 0-0 Qc2

Black seems poised to exploit the absence of White's queen from d1. How does White protect all his queenside pieces as well as c3?

15 Bd1 Qb2

16 Ng5!



Answer: he doesn't have to. Black simply has no soldiers to defend the porous kingside and that sector the board counts more than the queenside (16...Qxa1? 17 Bh5ch). Black's rapid collapse there should not be a surprise.

16 ...	Kd8
--------	-----

17 Nxh7	Re8
---------	-----

18 Bh5	Bd7
--------	-----

Or 18...Qxa1 19 Bxe8, Kxe8 20 Nf6ch, Kd8 21 h5! and queens.

19 Na3	Bxh4
--------	------

20 Bxe8	Bxe8
---------	------

21 Nf8!	Black Resigns
---------	---------------

Now the flip side: White plays dxc5 in the following but then overprotects e5 -- without the b2-b4-b5 thrust. And he pays the price.

(8) Kholmov-Naumkin, Moscow Championship 1984

1 e4	e6
------	----

2 d4	d5
------	----

3 e5	c5
------	----

4 c3	Nc6
------	-----

5 Nf3	Bd7
-------	-----

6 dxc5	Bxc5
--------	------

7 Bd3	Nge7
-------	------

8 Bf4?!	Ng6
---------	-----

9 Bg3	f6!
-------	-----

Well timed. White's delay in pushing his b-pawn has allowed Black to focus two minor pieces on e5 which means that square now falls to him.

10 exf6	Qxf6
---------	------

11 Nbd2	Nf4
---------	-----

12 Nb3	Bb6
--------	-----

Not falling for 12...Nxc3 13 Kf1, which costs a piece.

13 0-0	0-0
--------	-----

14 Bh4	Qh6
--------	-----

15 Bg5	Qh5
--------	-----

16 Bxf4	Rxf4
---------	------

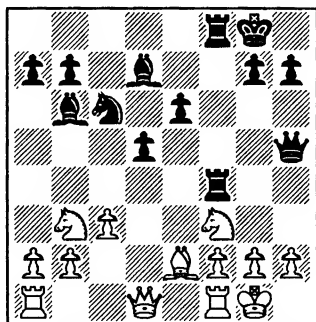
17 Be2	Raf8
--------	------

(See following diagram)

Black already has a dangerous kingside initiative, which the inevitable ...e6-e5-e4 will only enhance. White has lost the battle of the center and the consequences are:

18 Nc1	Qh6
--------	-----

19 b4	Qf6
-------	-----



20 Nd3	Rf5
21 Qb3	Be8
22 Rac1	Bh5
23 Qd1	e5!
24 Nd2	Qh4
25 Nc5	e4

Black gets e5 for his knight now, and White gets d4 in return; this is not an equal exchange.

26 g3	Bxe2
27 Qxe2	Qe7
28 Ndb3	Ne5
29 Nd4	R5f6
30 Ndb3	Bxc5
31 bxc5	Nd3

And this is why: the f2 square cannot be held after this and White's collapse follows directly.

32 Rb1	Rxf2
33 Rxf2	Rxf2
34 Qe3	Qf7
35 c6	bxc6
36 Nd4	h6
37 c4	Qh5
38 h4	Qg4
39 Rf1	Rxf1ch
40 Kxf1	c5

White Resigns

Because 41...d4 and 42...Qf3ch is overwhelming.

16 ...	Kd8
17 Nxf7	Re8
18 Bh5	Bd7

Or 18...Qxa1 19 Bxe8, Kxe8 20 Nf6ch, Kd8 21 h5! and queens.

19 Na3	Bxf4
20 Bxe8	Bxe8
21 Nf8!	Black Resigns

Now the flip side: White plays dxc5 in the following but then overprotects e5 -- without the b2-b4-b5 thrust. And he pays the price.

(8) Kholmov-Naumkin, Moscow Championship 1984

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5
4 c3	Nc6
5 Nf3	Bd7
6 dxc5	Bxc5
7 Bd3	Nge7
8 Bf4?!	Ng6
9 Bg3	f6!

Well timed. White's delay in pushing his b-pawn has allowed Black to focus two minor pieces on e5 which means that square now falls to him.

10 exf6	Qxf6
11 Nbd2	Nf4
12 Nb3	Bb6

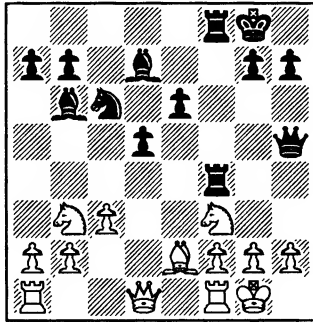
Not falling for 12...Nxf6 13 Kf1, which costs a piece.

13 0-0	0-0
14 Bh4	Qh6
15 Bg5	Qh5
16 Bxf4	Rxf4
17 Be2	Raf8

(See following diagram)

Black already has a dangerous kingside initiative, which the inevitable ...e6-e5-e4 will only enhance. White has lost the battle of the center and the consequences are:

18 Nc1	Qh6
19 b4	Qf6



20 Nd3	Rf5
21 Qb3	Be8
22 Rac1	Bh5
23 Qd1	e5!
24 Nd2	Qh4
25 Nc5	e4

Black gets e5 for his knight now, and White gets d4 in return; this is not an equal exchange.

26 g3	Bxe2
27 Qxe2	Qe7
28 Ndb3	Ne5
29 Nd4	R5f6
30 Ndb3	Bxc5
31 bxc5	Nd3

And this is why: the f2 square cannot be held after this and White's collapse follows directly.

32 Rb1	Rxf2
33 Rxf2	Rxf2
34 Qe3	Qf7
35 c6	bxc6
36 Nd4	h6
37 c4	Qh5
38 h4	Qg4
39 Rf1	Rxf1ch
40 Kxf1	c5

White Resigns

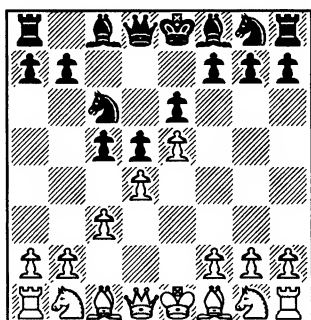
Because 41...d4 and 42...Qf3ch is overwhelming.

CHAPTER FOUR: The Modern 5...Nge7

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5
4 c3	Nc6

As noted earlier, the attack on e5 can also be carried out with 5...f6, but this has had a bad reputation since another Nimzovich game (versus Levenfish, Karlsbad 1911) which went 5 Nf3, f6 6 Bb5! and then 6...Bd7 7 0-0, Qb6 8 Bxc6, bxc6 9 exf6, Nxf6 10 Ne5, Bd6 11 dxc5! and 12 Bg5.

Black should delay the attack on e5 until White has committed his f1-bishop to a square other than b5. See also Illustrative Game 9.



5 Nf3 Nge7

This is more accurate than 5...Nh6, which appears to needlessly expose Black to the kingside rupture (*Bxh6*) while offering little in return. The knight at e7 can go to g6 or f5 but if it's developed at h6 it really is headed only to f5.

After 5...Nh6 White should continue a la Sveschnikov, with 6 dxc5!, Bxc5 7 b4 and if 7...Bb6, then 8 Bxh6, gxh6 9 b5, Ne7 10 Bd3.

In Sveschnikov-Nikolayev, Moscow 1992, White continued in a manner very similar to Sveschnikov's policy in Chapter Three: 10...Ng6 11 0-0, Qc7! 12 Re1, 0-0 13 a4, Bd7 14 Ra2 and on 14...f6 he exploited the kingside in a manner similar to Illustrative Game 6 with 15 Bxg6!, hxg6 16 Qd3, f5 17 Nbd2, Rfe8 18 Rc2 followed by preparation for g2-g4. See Illustrative Game 10.

Note that should Black meet 5...Nh6 6 dxc5 with 6...Ng4, White has 7 Qa4! This prevents the capture of the e-pawn and attacks the unprotected knight (7...h5 8 h3, Nh6 9 b4, Bd7 10 Bb5, a5 11 Bxc6 as in Kupreychik-Kaidanov, Lvov 1988).

Also reasonable for White is 6 Bd3, as below. Then 6...cxd4 7 cxd4, Nf5 8 Bxf5 transposes into our main line. And 6...f6 invites 7 Bxh6, gxh6 8 0-0 with good play against a loosened kingside (8...cxd4 9 cxd4, Bg7 10 Re1, 0-0 11 Nbd2, Qb6 12 exf6, Rxf6 13 Nb3, Bd7 14 Nc5 followed by Rcl and Bb1 as in Hendriks-Crouch, Dieren 1992).

6 Bd3

Another advantage of 5...Nge7 over other knight moves is that 6 dxc5 might be met by 6...Ng6 and the e5 pawn cannot be defended by Bf4.

6 ... cxd4

This results in play very similar to that of subsection (d) of Chapter One, which resulted from 5...Qb6 6 Be2, Nh6 7 Bd3.

On the inaccurate move order of 6...Nf5 7 0-0, cxd4 White could play 8 Nxd4! and enjoy the use of the d4 outpost.

7 cxd4 Nf5

8 Bxf5

The only consistent move.

8 ... exf5

9 Nc3

The exchange of pawns initiated at move six allows the knight to be developed here and then be transferred to f4 via e2. Also reasonable is 9 0-0 but White wants to retain the possibility of h2-h4 and Kf1.

A quite different plan is 9 0-0, Be7 10 Nc3, Be6 11 Na4. Then 11...Rc8 12 Bd2, b5 13 Nc5, Nxd4 turns out well for White after 14 Nxd4, Bxc5 15 Nxb5, 0-0 16 Bc3 as in Gusev-Galakhov, U.S.S.R. 1985.

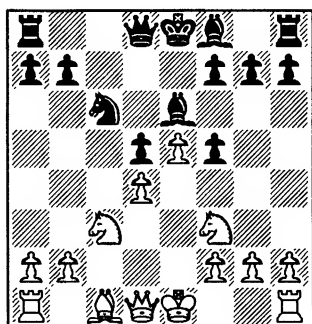
9 ... Be6

(See following diagram)

To avoid White's impending maneuver Black can try 9...Bb4 10 Bd2, Bxc3 11 Bxc3, Be6. Then 12 Qd2, a5 13 a4, h6 14 h4, 0-0 15 0-0, Qe7 16 Rfb1, Rfc8 17 b4 led to nothing in Sveschnikov-Chernin, Sochi 1986. A better plan would seem to be 15 Qf4 followed by Rh3-g3.

10 Ne2!

Now on 10...Bb4ch White will play another common idea in the Advance French, 11 Kf1!.



In contrast, **10 h4**, a useful move, can turn out favorably for White after **10...Be7 11 h5, Rc8 12 Ne2** as in Kupreychik-Vaganyan, Moscow 1987 -- when Black's next three moves were **...Kd7-c7-b8!**

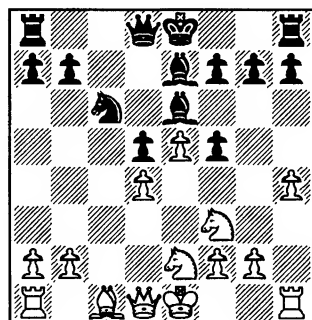
But **10 h4** allows Black some freedom with **10...Bb4 11 Bd2, Bxc3 12 Bxc3, h6** as in Kholmov-Vasiukov, Moscow Championship 1984 (*13 Rcl, Qb6 14 Qd2, Qa6* followed by *...Rc8* and *...Kd7*).

It's interesting to note that this game followed another, five years before, between these two players in which White erred with the hackneyed **10 0-0?** and was immediately worse after **10...Be7 11 Qb3, Rb8 12 Ne2, g5! 13 Bd2, f4**.

10 ... Be7

Now **11 Nf4, Qb6 12 0-0** turned out well in Kupreychik-Pirc, Teeside 1974 (*12...a5?! 13 h4, g6 14 g3, h6 15 Kg2, a4 16 Rb1, Qa6 17 a3, b5 18 b4!, Rc8 19 Nd3* and *20 Nc5*). But we prefer:

11 h4



Compared with the Benjamin-Edelman game cited in Chapter One, Black's queen has not moved to **b6**, but White has not lost a tempo with his **f1**-bishop in its route to **d3**.

Best now is **10...h6**, protecting a key square and preparing to push the g-pawn. Now on **11 Bf4?!**, **Qb6** **12 Qe2**, **a6** **13 Rd1?!**, **0-0-0!** Black is ready to secure the queenside lines with **...Kb8** and **...Rc8** as in Edelman-Glek, Philadelphia 1990.

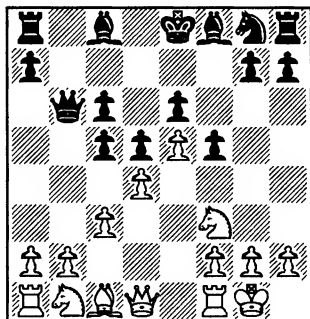
The White bishop is somewhat misplaced at **f4** and **12 Nf4** is better, e.g. **12...Rc8** **13 Rh3** followed by **Rg3** and **h4-h5**. See Illustrative Game 12.

Summing up: It used to be thought that in French positions the **Bxf5** capture led to sterile middlegames because White had given up his good bishop and was not able to exploit the weaknesses he created in the center. Today, the thinking is more optimistic because of the threats to Black's kingside from **Ne2-f4** and the **h2-h4** idea. It may not be much, but White seems to have a solid edge.

ILLUSTRATIVE GAMES

(9) Bjelajac-Despotovic, Yugoslavia 1977

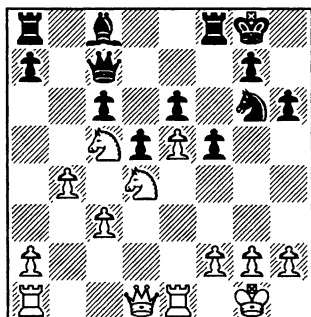
1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5
4 c3	Nc6
5 Nf3	f6?!
6 Bb5	Qb6
7 Bxc6ch	bxc6
8 0-0	f5



9 dxc5!

This is particularly effective now that Black, with his last move, has eliminated the possibility of ...f7-f6. Also the e6 square will be a target now for a d4-knight.

9 ...	Bxc5
10 b4	Bf8
11 Be3	Qc7
12 Nbd2	h6
13 Nb3	Ne7
14 Bc5!	Ng6
15 Re1	Bxc5
16 Nxc5	0-0
17 Nd4	



Black had captured with a pawn at move seven in order to bring his bishop out to a6. That idea has failed and his minor pieces are substantially worse than White's.

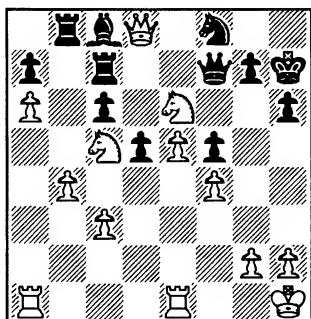
17 ...	Re8
18 Qh5	Qf7
19 Qh3!	

Avoiding the trick of 19 Nxc6, Nxe5!.

19 ...	Bd7
20 a4	Nf8
21 a5	Rec8
22 f4	Rc7
23 a6	Re8
24 Nb7	

The strength of White's position is demonstrated by the amount of time he can take in selecting a winning plan. Black is fatally passive.

24 ...	Rb8
25 Qe3	Bc8
26 Nc5	Nh7
27 Qh3	Nf8
28 Kh1	Qg6
29 Qh4	Qf7?
30 Qd8!	Kh7
31 Ndx6!	



This requires a bit of calculation but it leads to a forced win by move 36.

31 ...	Nxe6
32 Nxe6	Re7
33 Nf8ch	Kg8
34 Nd7ch!	Re8
35 e6	Qg6
36 Qc7	

To save his rook Black must create a winning passed d-pawn.

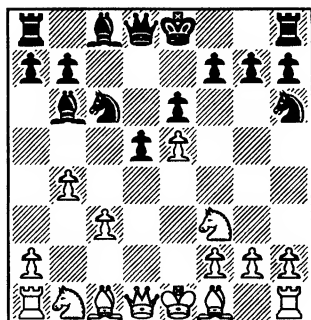
36 ...	Bxd7
37 exd7	Red8
38 Qxa7	Qf7
39 Qxb8!	Rxb8
40 a7	Ra8
41 Re8ch!	Black Resigns

(10) Sveschnikov-Dukhov, Moscow 1992

1 e4

e6

2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5
4 c3	Nc6
5 Nf3	Nh6
6 dxc5	Bxc5
7 b4	Bb6



Where else for this bishop? Maybe e7. Then 8 Bxh6 and 9 b5 leads to a middlegame in which the Black kingside is relatively safer (...Bg5) but there is little pressure on the center (*Nd4*).

8 Bxh6	gxh6
9 b5	Ne7
10 Bd3	

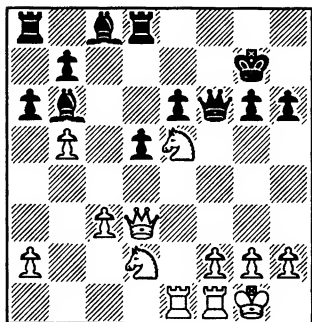
Note that 10 Qd2, which worked well in a similar position in Game 7, allows Black to become too active after 10...Ng6 11 Qxh6, Qc7 and if 12 Qg7, Qc5.

10 ...	Ng6
11 0-0	f6?
12 Bxg6ch	hxg6
13 Qd3	Kf7
14 exf6	

Yet another illustration of the exploitation of the kingside we saw in Game 6. This time White wins absolute control of e5.

14 ...	Qxf6
15 Nbd2	Rd8
16 Rae1	a6
17 Ne5ch	Kg7

(See following diagram)



18 Ndf3 Bd7

19 Nd4

Nimzovich would have been proud. The threat is 20 Nxd7.

19 ... Bxd4

20 Qxd4 axb5

Also 20...Bxb5 21 Re3! and if 21...Bxf1 22 Rf3 and wins.

21 Re3 Ra4

22 Qb6 Rf4

23 Qc7!

Black has stopped the Rf3 idea but allowed another win (23...Qe7 24 Nxc6, Kxc6 25 Qxf4).

23 ... g5

24 Nxd7 Qe7

25 Nc5 Black Resigns

(11) Sveschnikov-Psakhis, Sochi 1987

1 e4 e6

2 d4 d5

3 e5 c5

4 c3 Nc6

5 Nf3 Nge7

6 Bd3 cxd4

7 cxd4 Nf5

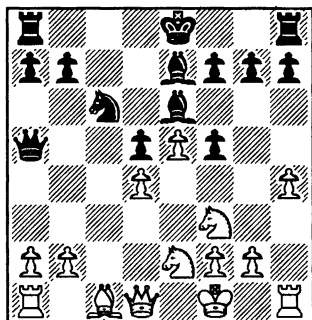
8 Bxf5 exf5

9 Nc3 Be6

10 Ne2 Be7

11 h4 Qa5ch?!

12 Kf1!

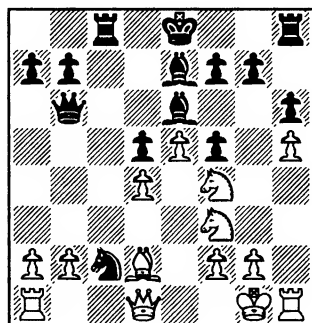


The King is not misplaced here because his h1-rook will enter the game via h3.

12 ...	h6
13 Nf4	Rc8
14 Kf1!	

Now the king avoids all danger along the f1-a6 diagonal. The h1-rook can always be activated along the third rank, or, if necessary, along the first rank after Kh2.

14 ...	Qb6
15 h5	Nb4?!
16 Bd2!	Nc2?



Black's play has been entirely consistent -- and wrong. On this or the previous move, castling was preferable.

17 Nxe6!	fxe6
18 Rc1	

White has eliminated any protection for the c8-rook, so the knight is now pinned at c2 and Black is therefore forced into the ensuing complications. If

Black had avoided this with 18...Qxe6?, then 19 Rc1, Nb4 20 Rxc8ch, Qxc8 21 Bxb4 and 22 Qa4ch would win a piece.

The crucial alternative was 18...Nxa1, after which 19 Nxc7ch and 20 Nxf5 gives White excellent compensation for the exchange.

18 ...	Qxb2
19 Ne1	Qxd4
20 Rxc2	0-0
21 Rh3!	

This thwarts attempts to make Black's pawns into compensation for the lost piece. Now 21...Qxe5 22 Be3, Qd6 23 Qe2 allows White to coordinate his pieces.

21 ...	Rxc2
22 Nxc2	Qa4
23 Rc3	Qxa2
24 Nd4	Qa6

Or 24...Bb4 25 Rc2, Qa4, after which 26 Nxe6, Re8 27 Nxc7! must win.

25 Rg3	Black Resigns
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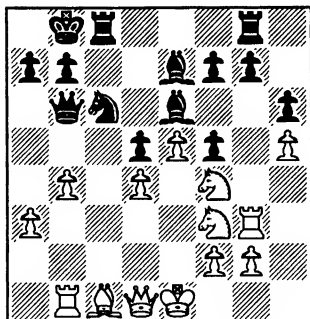
(12) Nun-Zaichik, Polanica-Zdrui 1989

1 e4	c5
2 c3	e6
3 d4	d5
4 e5	Nc6
5 Nf3	Nh6
6 Bd3	cxd4
7 cxd4	Nf5
8 Bxf5	exf5
9 Nc3	Be6
10 Ne2	Be7
11 h4	h6
12 Nf4	Rc8
13 Rh3	Kd7

A surprisingly common king maneuver by Black, almost as common as Kf1-g1 by White. The Black king heads for b8 and because the center is so solidly closed the transfer cannot be immediately exploited by White.

14 h5	Kc7
15 Rg3	Rg8

16 a3!	Kb8
17 b4	Qb6
18 Rb1	



The key word in the last sentence was "immediately". White now begins a pawn storm directed at the new occupant of b8.

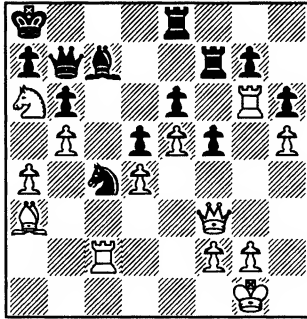
18 ...	Na5
19 Kf1	Nc4
20 Kg1	Qc7
21 a4	Qd7
22 Nd3	Qd8
23 Nc5	b6
24 Nxe6	fxe6
25 Rg6!	

What has White gained from the exchanges on f5 and e6? Hasn't Black's pawn structure been corrected at the cost of White's good bishop?

No, White has gotten something else in return, including a point of penetration at g6 and a new target at e6. Another knight is now headed to b4 and c6.

25 ...	Qd7
26 Ne1!	Rce8
27 Nd3	Bd8
28 b5	Rgf8
29 Nb4	Ka8
30 Rb3	Rf7
31 Rc3	Na5
32 Na6	Nc4

- | | |
|--------|-----|
| 33 Qf3 | Qb7 |
| 34 Rc2 | Bc7 |
| 35 Ba3 | |



And this is the "bad" bishop? Consider what Black's bishop does in the remaining moves.

- | | |
|----------|-----|
| 35 ... | Bb8 |
| 36 Bb4 | Bc7 |
| 37 Qg3 | Bd8 |
| 38 Bd6 | Qd7 |
| 39 Qd3 | Qb7 |
| 40 Rxc4! | dx4 |
| 41 Qxc4 | |

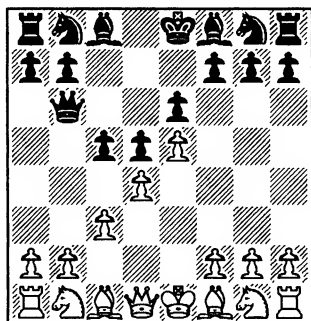
White gets two passed pawns for the exchange.

- | | |
|---------|---------------|
| 41 ... | f4 |
| 42 Rxe6 | Rxe6 |
| 43 Qxe6 | f3 |
| 44 Qe8 | Rd7 |
| 45 gxf3 | Qc8 |
| 46 Kg2 | Black Resigns |

CHAPTER FIVE: The Wade Finesse, 4...Qb6

You've been forewarned: The Advance French has numerous transpositional possibilities and, unfortunately, most of them are at the service of Black, rather than White. In this chapter we examine the ...Qb6 move that we saw at the fifth turn in Chapters One and Two. However, it can also be played at the fourth move, with one significant difference.

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5
4 c3	Qb6



This has been attributed to the New Zealand (later British) I.M. Robert Wade. The primary objective is to exchange off the bad c8-bishop by way of ...Bd7-b5.

But this strategic maneuver leaves Black vulnerable to a fast-developing bid for the initiative such as the Sveschnikov exchange on c5.

5 Nf3	Bd7
6 Be2	

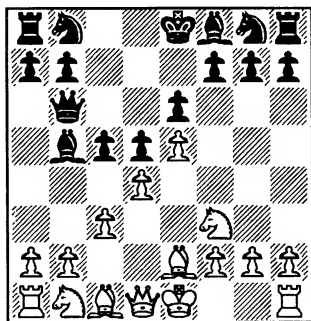
Now, of course, 6...Nc6 leads back into Chapter One. In light of what happens next move, one wonders why 6...cxd4 7 cxd4, Bb5 is rarely played. It appeared in a few games around 1960 but the authorities concluded that White's ability to develop his b1-knight at c3 or expand with this queenside pawns was a major concession by Black.

For example, 8 0-0, Bxe2 9 Qxe2, Ne7 (not 9...Qa6 because of 10 Nb5). Then 10 Be3, Nec6!? 11 a3!, Nd7 12 b4, Be7 13 Nc3 and 14 Na4, or

10...Nbc6 11 a3, Na5 12 b4, Nc4 13 Nbd2. Black's inability to meet a2-a3 with ...c5-c4 hurts him in such instances.

The other way to use 6...cxd4 is to follow with 7...Bb4ch and gain some time. As usual, this has the drawback of easing White's game by eliminating his pawn-bound bishop and of developing his queenside. See Illustrative Game 13.

6 ... Bb5



7 dxc5!

White must strike at this point. With 7 0-0 he may be preparing for the exchange: 7...Nc6?! 8 dxc5!, Bxc5 9 b4, Bxe2 10 Qxe2, Be7 11 a4, Rc8 12 a5 as in Nadyrkanov-Ziyatdinov, Tashkent 1988, or 8 Bxb5, Qxb5 9 a4, Qb6 10 dxc5, Bxc5 11 b4.

But Black can improve with Wade's original intention of 7...Bxe2 8 Qxe2, Qa6!, and then 9 Qd1, Nd7!.

It's interesting that for more than 40 years its been known that 9...Nc6 is bad because 10 dxc5!, Bxc5 11 b4 offers White too strong an initiative. So the point behind 9...Nd7 was remembered by theory but the basic White plan of dxc5 in other Advance Variation positions was largely forgotten.

7 ... Bxc5

On 7...Bxe2 8 Qxe2, Bxc5 White transposes into the main line with 9 0-0.

8 0-0

Not hurrying the b2-b4 idea. Suetin claims that the best reply to 8 b4 is 8...Bf8!. Perhaps, but after the more accurate 8 0-0 Black finds that 8...Ne7 9 b4 will preclude that retreat.

8 ... Bxe2

Here 8...a5 counters one White idea but creates another, the occupation of b5. After 9 Bxb5ch, Qxb5 10 Na3! White gets a fine game after 10...Qb6 11 Qa4ch, Nc6 12 Qg4! or 10...Qd7 11 Qe2, Nc7 12 Nb5 and 13 Be3.

White gets an even better idea following 10...Bxa3 11 bxa3, Ne7 12 a4 and Ba3/Rb1. For example, 12...Qc4 13 Rb1, Nbc6 14 Rxb7, 0-0 15 Ba3 was the way Gulko-Vitolins, U.S.S.R. 1979 went, with Black clearly worse on 15...Rfe8 16 Qb3, Ng6 17 Qxc4, dxc4 18 Re1, Rab8 19 Rb5.

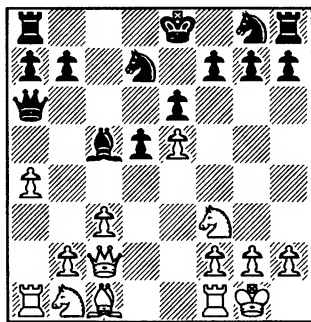
9 Qxe2 Qa6

This thwarts the full impact of the b2-b4 plan: 9...Nc6 (not 9...Ne7? 10 b4) 10 b4, Be7 11 Na3 followed by 12 Be3, and if 12...Qc7, then 13 Nb5.

10 Qc2 Nd7

To avoid the potential pawn fork that could follow 10...Nc6 11 a4 and b2-b4-b5.

11 a4!



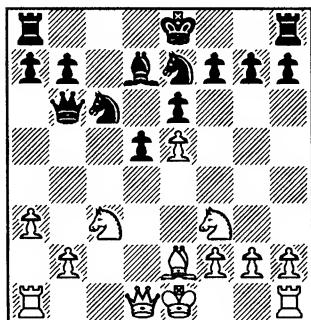
An important move which initiates a general queenside advance. We are following the instructive 1990 game Kupreychik-Molnar which can be found below.

ILLUSTRATIVE GAMES

(13) Honfi-Lombard, Bern 1974

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5
4 c3	Qb6

5 Nf3	Bd7
6 Be2	cxd4
7 cxd4	Bb4ch?!
8 Bd2	Nc6
9 Bc3!	Nge7
10 a3	Bxc3ch
11 Nxc3	



Clever play by White has solved his queenside problems at no cost (11...Qxb2?? 12 Na4). Generally, White would like to achieve a2-a3 and b2-b4 in the Advance Variation but often he is stopped by Black (...c5-c4!) or he decides against putting his pawns on the same color as his dark-squared bishop. Here, neither of those cases is present and White soon obtains an edge.

11 ...	Na5
12 b4	Rc8
13 Na4!	Bxa4
— 14 Qxa4ch	Nac6
15 0-0	0-0
16 b5	

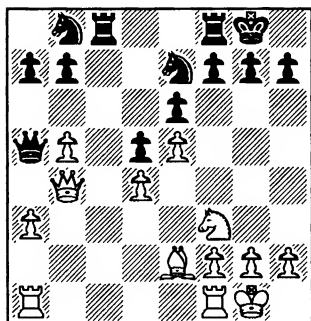
Now 16...Na5 puts the knight in limbo.

16 ...	Qa5
17 Qb3	Nb8
18 Qb4!	

(See following diagram)

Now the endgame after 18...Qxb4 leaves a7 as a permanent weakling. White obtains a slightly different ending, also favorable.

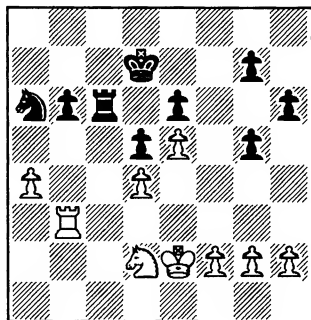
18 ...	Qc7
--------	-----



19 Bd3	Ng6
20 Qd2	Qc3
21 Bxg6	fxg6?!
22 Rfc1!	Qxd2
23 Nxd2	g5
24 Kf1	Kf7
25 Ke2	Ke7
26 Nb3	b6
27 a4	

One winning plan is illustrated by 27...Kd7 28 a5, Rxc1 29 Rxc1, Rc8 30 Rxc8 and the knight and pawn ending is very good for White after 31 a6!

27 ...	a5
28 bxa6	Nxa6
29 Rab1	Kd7
30 Rxc8	Rxc8
31 Nd2	Rc6
32 Rb3	h6



33 Rg3 Nb4

34 h4

Both sides have pawn targets but Black's (at b6 and g7) are the weaker. Clearly 34...gxh4 35 Rxc7 is too much to grant White.

34 ... Nc2

35 Rg4 Rc3

36 hxg5 hxg5

37 Nf3 Rc4

38 Kd3 Nb4ch

39 Kd2 Nc6

40 Rxc7 Nxd4

41 Rg7ch Kc6

42 Ng5!

The immediate rook ending (42 Nxd4?) must be avoided if White wants to preserve winning chances. White now forces the win of the e-pawn, after which he has three passed pawns.

42 ... Rxa4

43 Re7 Kc5

44 Nxe6ch Nxe6

45 Rxe6 Ra2ch

46 Ke3 d4ch

47 Kf3 b5

48 Re8 Kd5

49 e6 Ra7

50 e7!

Trading the e-pawn for the more dangerous b-pawn.

50 ... Ke6

51 Rb8 Kxe7

52 Rxb5 Kd6

53 g4 Kc6

54 Rb8 Kd5

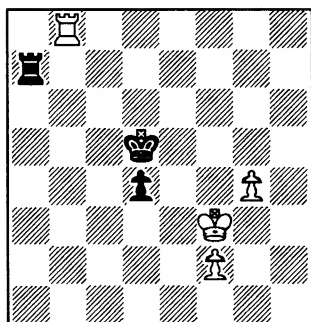
(See following diagram)

At move 52 and again at move 54 Black could have tried ...Rd7 to push the d-pawn, but White is able to blockade it and win, e.g. 54...Rd7 55 Ke4, d3 56 Rb1, Kc5 57 Ke3, Kc4 58 Rc1ch and 59 Kd2.

55 Rd8ch Ke5

56 Kg3 Ke4

57 f4 d3



58 f5 Rc7

59 Re8ch Kd4

60 Kf4 Rc4

Nikolai Minev later pointed out that 60...d2 61 Rd8ch, Kc3 62 Rxd2, Kxd2 63 f6, Rc4ch 64 Kf5, Rc5ch 65 Kg6?, Ke3 66 f7, Rc8 67 g5, Kf4! only draws, but 65 Ke6! wins.

61 Rd8ch Kc3ch

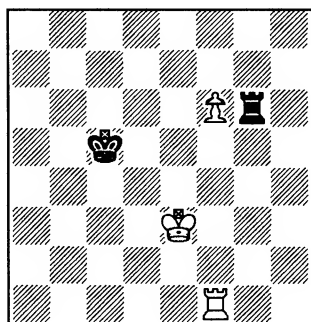
62 Ke3 Rxc4

63 Rxd3ch Kc4

64 Rd1 Kc5

65 f6 Rg6

66 Rf1



Next stop the Lucena position. Black can resign.

66 ... Rg8

67 Kf4 Kd6

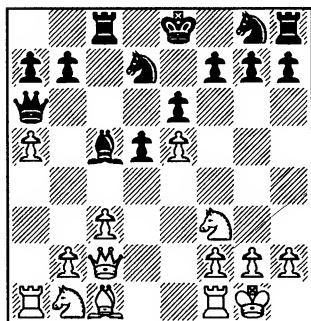
68 Re1 Kd7

69 Kf5 Re8

70 Rxe8	Kxe8
71 Kg6	Black Resigns

(14) Kupreychik-Molnar, Rimavska Sobota 1990

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5
4 c3	Qb6
5 Nf3	Bd7
6 Be2	Bb5
7 dxc5	Bxc5
8 0-0	Bxe2
9 Qxe2	Qa6
10 Qc2	Nd7
11 a4	Rc8
12 a5!	

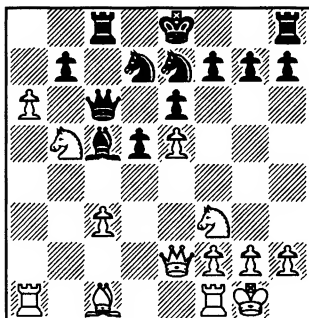


A valuable space-gaining move which prepares Qa4 and b2-b4-b5. Black's next move allows him to meet 13 b4, with 13...Bxb4.

12 ...	Qc6
13 Qe2	a6
14 b4	Ba7
15 Na3	Ne7
16 b5!	axb5
17 Nxb5	Bc5
18 a6!	

(See following diagram)

Now 18...bxa6 19 Rxa6, Qxa6? 20 Nc7ch drops the queen.



18 ...	0-0
19 a7	Ra8
20 Nfd4	Qb6
21 Nb3!	Nc6
22 Nxc5	Nxc5
23 Ba3!	

This establishes a winning pin on c5.

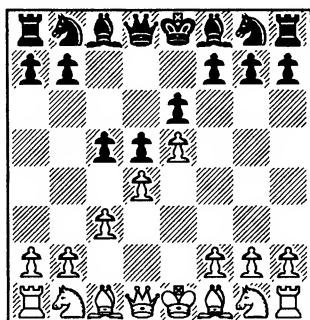
23 ...	Nxa7
24 Qe3	Rfc8
25 Nd6	Rc7
26 Rfb1	Qc6
27 Bxc5	Qxc5
28 Qxc5	Rxc5
29 Rb7	Rxc3
30 Kf1	Black Resigns

CHAPTER SIX: The Maneuvering 4...Ne7

This is another finesse, which first gained attention in the hands of Mikhail Botvinnik, and recently has been favored by Yugoslav grandmaster Vlado Kovacevic. It allows Black to make an early choice about the knight, which may be headed for **f5**, **g6** -- or most interestingly, to **c6**.

But there are limits to how much maneuvering Black's position can take, even with a closed center.

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5
4 c3	



A rare visitor is **4...Bd7 5 Nf3, a6** with the idea of **6...Bb5**. We'll consider this in a slightly different form in the next chapter. But here it's worth pointing out **6 dxc5, Bxc5 7 Bd3, Ne7** and now **8 a4** or **8 b4** look correct, whereas **8 Bf4?, Ng6 9 Bg3, Bb5!** equalizes for Black (Nun-Spiridonov, Decin 1975 -- *10 Bxb5ch, axb5 11 b4, Bb6 12 0-0, h5 13 h4, Qd7* and *...Ne7-f5*).

4 ...	Ne7
-------	-----

This maneuver would seem to make more sense if Black could count on a Sveschnikov strategy of **dxc5**, which would make **e5**, rather than **d4**, the main White weakness in the center. The repositioning of the **g8**-knight makes the position resemble something out of the Tarrasch French. And, in fact, we can transpose exactly into a gambit variation of the Tarrasch that has yet to be refuted. See next note.

5 Nf3	Nec6
-------	------

Of course, **5...Nbc6** is another way of reaching Chapter Four. A slightly different move order for Black is **5...Nd7** and then **6 Bd3, Qb6 7 0-0, Nc6 8 Nbd2** reaches the gambit position mentioned above. But in Hazai-F. Portisch, Hungarian Championship 1979 White played the superior **8 Bc2!**, which risks nothing. See Illustrative Game 15.

Botvinnik preferred **5...Nf5** to **5...Nec6**. His game from Hastings 1961-2 with Barden went **6 dxc5, Bxc5 7 Bd3, Nc6 8 0-0, Nh4!** -- and what has happened is that White has initiated the Sveschnikov plan under the worst circumstances.

Better is **6 Bd3, cxd4 7 Bxf5, exf5** (Barden-Gligoric, Hastings 1957-8) and now **8 Nxd4!**

6 Be3!?

There is no unanimity about White's best policy, but this move -- which seeks to make **d4** a strong point -- appears to be the most promising method of exploiting Black's attack on **e5**.

Other possibilities include:

(a) **6 Bd3**, preparing the gambit line mentioned above -- **6...Nc6 7 Nbd2, Qb6 8 0-0!, cxd4 9 cxd4, Nxd4 10 Nxd4, Qxd4 11 Nf3, Qb6 12 Qc2!**

(b) **6 Bg5** and **6...Qd7?! 7 dxc5** is a good version of the Sveschnikov strategy -- **7...Bxc5 8 Bd3, Qc7 9 b4, Bb6 10 Bf4, Nd7 11 0-0!**. Then **11...Ndx5 12 Nxe5, Nxe5 13 Re1** is a problem.

In Sveschnikov-Zeller, Boblingen 1992, Black tried to exploit the pinned e-pawn with **11...f6**, but there followed **12 a4, a6 13 b5!, axb5 14 Na3!, fxe5 15 Nxb5** with a very strong attack.

(c) **6 h4, Nd7 7 h5** makes sense as Black's knights play little role on the kingside now and **h5-h6** is coming up. After **7...f6 8 exf6, Nxf6 9 h6, g6 10 Bg5** the Black weaknesses on the dark squares are not so bad as they seem.

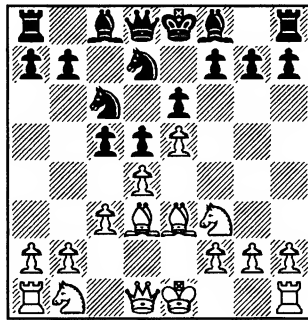
Sveschnikov-Kovacevic, Belgrade (GMA) 1988, went **10...Bd6 11 Be2, 0-0 12 0-0, cxd4 13 Nxd4!?, Bd7 14 Nd2, Nxd4 15 cxd4, Qb6** and Black had counterchances (although he lost).

This is the consistent method of defending c5.

The problem with 6...b6 7 Bd3, Ba6 is that Black loses a lot of time after 8 Bxa6, Nxa6 9 Qa4!, Nab8 10 0-0, e.g. 10...Qd7 11 Qc2 (anticipating 11...Nxe5!), Be7 12 h4, Qd8 13 Rd1, Nd7 14 h5, 0-0 15 Qe2.

To get his pieces working harmoniously took Black six moves (moves 10-15) after which White was ready for the inevitable opening of the center -- 15...f6 16 exf6, Bxf6 17 h6, g6 18 c4! and White won in 38 moves.

7 Bd3



We are following Kupreychik-Kovacevic, Ljubljana 1989, in which Black forestalled dxc5 and b2-b4 with 7...a5?! 8 Nbd2, cxd4 9 cxd4, a4.

However, White was able to inflict more kingside damage at a faster rate with 10 a3, Be7 11 h4, h6 12 h5, Nb6 13 Nh2 and 14 Qg4. He won in 31 moves.

What had White intended in response to the natural 7...Qb6? Certainly not 8 Qb3 or 8 Qe2, both of which allow 8...c4!. Most likely it was 8 Qd2, with unclear chances, or the speculative 8 Na3!?! (8...cxd4 9 cxd4, Qxb2 10 Nb5, Bb4ch 11 Kf1).

ILLUSTRATIVE GAMES

(15) Hazai-F. Portisch, Hungarian Championship 1979

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	c5

4 Nc3	Ne7
5 Nf3	Bd7
6 Bd3	Qb6
7 0-0	Nc6
8 Bc2	

This bishop can be preserved now on 8...cxd4 9 cxd4, Nb4 by 10 Ba4! and 11 a3 with advantage to White.

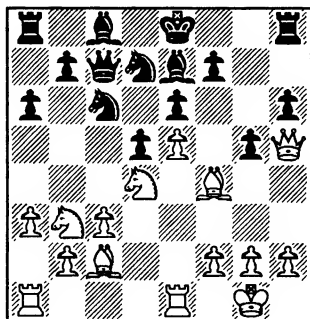
8 ...	Be7
9 Re1	h6
10 a3!	Bg5?!

When the attack on d4 fails, as it has here, Black can have severe developmental problems in the Advance French. Black's last move seeks to lure one of d4's defenders (11 Nxc5) as well as a defender of b2 (11 Bxc5).

11 dxc5!	Qxc5
12 Nbd2	

Even better is 12 Nxc5 and 13 Qg4. White now obtains an ideal version of the Sveschnikov strategy with the White e-pawn rock solid and no Black counterplay in sight.

12 ...	Be7
13 Nb3	Qb6
14 Bf4	a6
15 Nfd4	Qc7
16 Qg4	g5
17 Qh5!	



Black cannot accept the consequences of 18 Nxe6 followed by Ng7ch and e5-e6. He now defends what has become a critical position well.

17 ...	Nb6!
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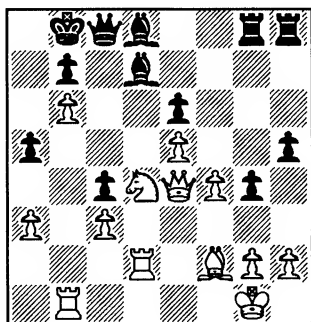
18 Bg3	Nc4
19 Re2	Bd7
20 Bd3	Qb6
21 Rb1	Nxd4
22 Nxd4	Bc5
23 Nf3!	0-0-0
24 b4	Be7
25 Qxf7	

White now has a won position, both materially and positionally. But his winning technique places this in doubt.

25 ...	Rde8
26 Bxc4	dx4
27 Nd4	h5
28 f3	Bd8
29 Qg6?	Reg8
30 Qe4	Kb8?

Returning the compliment. White 30...Be8! the bishop is headed for d3 via g6 and the game has to be won all over again.

31 Bf2	Qc7
32 b5	a5
33 b6!	Qc8
34 Rd2	g4
35 f4	



Now Black's queen and light squared bishop are frozen out of the key lines, and Black, as a result, has no counterplay.

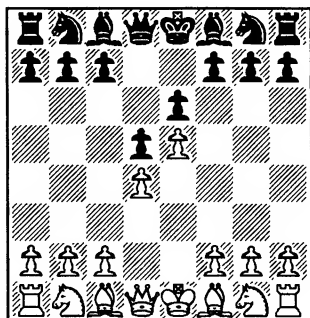
35 ...	h4
36 Be3	Be8

37 f5!	exf5
38 Qd5	f4!?
39 Bxf4	Rf8
40 e6ch	Rxf4
41 Qe5ch	Black Resigns

CHAPTER SEVEN: Other Defenses

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	

The attack on the base of the pawn chain (3...c5) is almost a knee-jerk reaction these days, so much accustomed are we to Aron Nimzovich's principles. But this is not the only option at Black's disposal.



Possibilities include:

- (a) Another maneuver, 3...Ne7
- (c) The queenside fianchetto 3...b6
- (d) The attack on the front of the pawn chain 3...f6?!
- (e) The Nimzovichian 3...Nc6

(a)

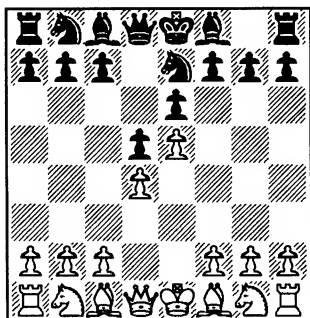
Another Maneuver 3...Ne7
(After 1 e4, e6 2 d4, d5 3 e5)

This may transpose into Chapter Six after 4 Nf3, c5 or Chapter Four if Black cooperates. In the rare instances in which 3...Ne7 has been tried, Black has generally sought to keep the opening on an independent course.

(See following diagram)

4 Nf3

White should not be the first to shift out of our system. As usual, he will meet ...c7-c5 with c2-c3.



4 ... b6

This order of moves allows Black to seek the exchange of his bad bishop (5...Ba6) but without allowing White some more promising system of development such as if he had played 3...b6 (and allowed 4 Nh3 for example).

Here 5 c4 or 5 c3 and 6 a4 are among several promising lines for White, e.g. 5 c3, Qd7 (not 5...Ba6? 6 Bxa6, Nxa6 7 Qa4ch) 6 a4, c6 7 a5! or 5 c4, Qd7 6 Nc3, Bb7 7 cxd5, Nxd5 8 Bd3 as in Illustrative Game 17.

5 Nc3!? Ba6

6 Nb5

A different idea involving Nc3 is Bxa6 followed by Ne2 and c2-c3. This is demonstrated by Illustrative Game 16, which began with 5 h4.

6 ... Nc8!?

Black can take certain liberties when the center is closed. With this move he covers d6 and therefore prepares to oust the knight (6...c6? 7 Nd6ch).

However, this is a serious loss of time because of 7 Ng5, and if 7...c6 then 8 Qh5, g6 9 Qh3 with the idea of 9...c6 10 Nxe6!?

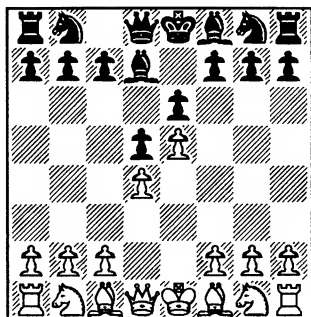
Black defended with 9...Qd7 but 10 c4, Bxb5 11 cxb5, Bb4ch 12 Kd1 retained White's edge. After 12...Bf8 13 Bd3, Bg7 Black managed to defend (and eventually won) but that was not the fault of the opening.

(b) The Neo-Wade 3...Bd7

(After 1 e4, e6 2 d4, d5 3 e5)

This is occasionally seen in connection with Black's next move as another means of achieving the positionally desirable ...Bb5.

(See following diagram)



4 Nf3 a6
5 Nbd2

Two can play the "bad" bishop game: with 5 Bg5 Black is forced to choose between 5...Be7 6 Bxe7, Nxe7, which helps White out, or the somewhat confining 5...Ne7 or 5...Qc8?!

The latter is so out of character that it makes 6 c4! a strong idea. Then 6...h6 7 Be3, dxc4 8 Bxc4, Ne7 9 Nc3, Bc6 10 0-0, Qd7 11 Rac1 and, despite Black's control of the d5 square, he is quite the worst off (Bronstein-Kyarner, Tallin 1981 saw 11...a5? 12 d5!, exd5 13 Bd3 and White soon had a winning attack).

The text is more direct. Now on 5...Bb5 White has a choice between 6 a4, Bxf1 7 Nxf1 followed by 8 Ng3 and castling, or 6 Bd3!?, Bxd3 7 cxd3, after which the inevitable ...c5 will allow White to undouble his pawns.

5 ... c5
6 dxc5!

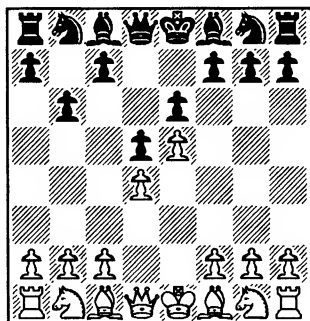
This leads to a position in which Black's third and fourth moves have little to do with the demands of the position. White will continue with traditional attacking move -- such as Bd3, Nb3, Bf4 and Re1 after castling. These must assure him of some advantage, since Black has lost quite a bit of time. See Illustrative Game 18.

(c)

The Queenside Fianchetto 3...b6 (After 1 e4, e6 2 d4, d5 3 e5)

After this move Black declares he will not be putting pressure on d4, since ...Qb6 is now out of the question. Instead, he will let White assume

the role of the pusher of pawns that open the position. Black hopes to exchange bishops after ...Ba6 with no weaknesses.



4 Bb5ch!?

This is the latest try and one that would have been looked on with horror in Nimzovich's day since it seems to be inviting an exchange of bishops. (It isn't).

Another promising idea is 4 Nf3, and if 4...Ne7 then 6 c4 transposing into subsection (a) above. Or 4 Nh3!? with the idea of an early Nf4 and Qg4.

4 ... c6

The point of White's move is to meet 4...Bd7 with 5 Bd3!, after which the ...Ba6 plan has been thwarted. Black then has an extra tempo -- but it's not a useful tempo. In fact, since ...Qb6 is unavailable and ...0-0-0 is now a bit riskier, White has gained quite a bit from the inclusion of the extra enemy move.

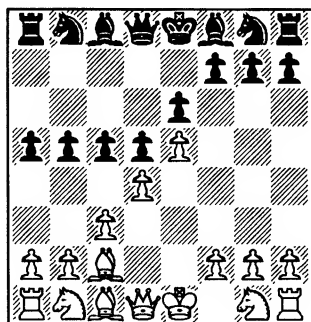
Play could then continue 5...c5 6 c3 (Clearly this is one time when 6 dxc5? is out of place because of 6...bxc5!), Nc6 7 Nf3, f6 8 0-0, fxe5 9 dxe5, Qc7 and White is just in time to control the center with 10 Re1 and 11 c4!.

The game Anand-Rogers, Manila 1990 went 10...Nh6 11 c4, d4 12 Na3, a6 13 Be4, 0-0-0 14 Nc2, Nf7 15 Bf4, Be7 and in the mutual wing attacks (16 b4, g5 17 Bg3, g4 18 Nd2, Ncxe5 19 a4, cxb4 20 a5!) White came out on top.

5 Ba4!

This bishop will assume a new life at c2 after c2-c3. Now 5...Ba6 would only inconvenience White temporarily (6 Ne2).

5 ...	a5
6 c3	b5
7 Bc2	c5



Black's queenside is on the march and it is not certain that White has anything to attack yet on the other wing.

However, Lein-Gonzales, St. John 1988 demonstrated White's resources: 8 Nf3, Nc6 9 0-0, c4 10 Re1, h6 11 Nbd2, Nge7 12 Nf1, Bd7 and now 13 Ne3, Nc8 14 b3!, cxb3 15 axb3, Nb6 16 Bd3, b4 17 c4.

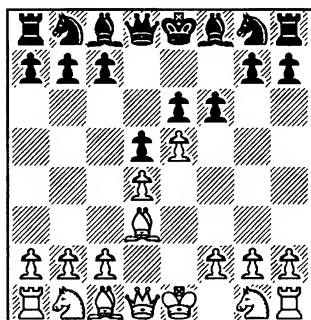
(d)

The Attack on the Front of the Pawn Chain 3...f6?!

(After 1 e4, e6 2 d4, d5 3 e5)

This appears to be premature in the extreme.

4 Bd3



The threat of 5 Qh5ch cannot be dismissed lightly. After $4...g6$ 5 exf6 or 5 Bf4 both give the White bishops excellent chances.

(e) The Nimzovichian $3...Nc6$

(After 1 e4 , 2 d4 , 3 e5)

This has nothing to recommend it except that it was played by Aron Nimzovich at the great New York 1927 tournament against Rudolf Spielmann. The position takes on the character of Nimzo's similar defense of 1 e4 , 2 Nc6 , 3 d5 -- except that Black strives to play $...Bf5$ before locking the center with $...e7-e6$.

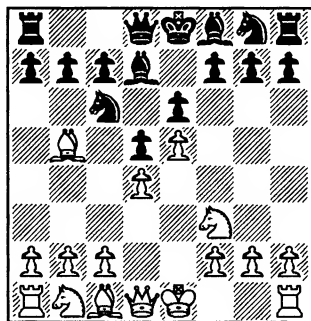
4 Nf3 $f6$

The Nimzo-Spielmann game went $4...b6$ 5 c3 , 6 Nce7 7 Bd3 , $a5$ and White maintained his advantage with 7 Qe2 (despite a later turn of events).

5 Bb5!

As Nimzovich himself had demonstrated in an 1911 game, the early attack on $e5$ by way of $f7-f6$ often allows this sharp pinning move.

$5 \dots$ $Bd7$



Threatens $6...Nxe5$ (7 Bxd7ch , 8 Nxd7).

6 Qe2!

And White's development is much more harmonious.

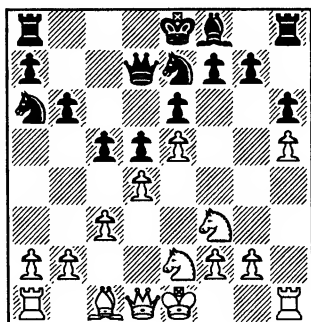
ILLUSTRATIVE GAMES

(16) Fedorowicz-Prie, Paris 1989

1 e4	$e6$
2 d4	$d5$
3 e5	$Ne7$
4 Nf3	$b6$
5 h4	$Qd7$

This odd-looking move is often played by Black. It anticipates a piece-winning **Qa4ch** by White (after ...**Ba6/Bxa6** and **c2-c4**). Also, the queen will later find an excellent square at **b5** after a trade of light colored bishops.

6 h5	h6
7 Nc3	Ba6
8 Bxa6	Nxa6
9 Ne2	c5
10 c3	

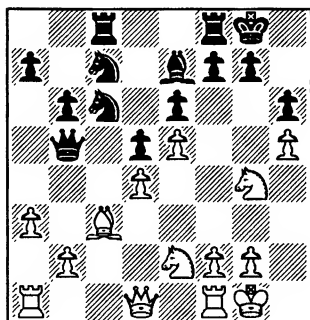


Here is the underlying problem with these non **3...c5** variations: Black right now would have the easiest method of opening the position for his pieces (...**cxd4**). But after **Nexd4!** White would benefit the most from that exchange. And since ...**f6** is too risky, Black must allow his opponent to enjoy a spatial superiority for the next several moves.

10 ...	Rc8
11 0-0	Nc6
12 Nh2!	Nc7
13 Ng4	Be7
14 Qb3	cxd4
15 cxd4	Nb4
16 Qd1	Qb5
17 Bd2	0-0
18 a3!	Nc6
19 Bc3	

(See following diagram)

With the c-file now safely blocked by White and Black pieces, the kingside becomes the center of attention.



19 ...	Na5
20 a4	Qd7
21 Qd3	Ne8
22 f4	f5
23 exf6	Nxf6
24 Ne5	Qe8
25 Ng6	Rf7
26 Ng3	

An irony of Black's bishop trading strategy is that there is now no Black piece that can adequately defend e6, e.g. 27 Rae1 and 28 f5.

26 ...	Bd6
27 Rae1	Qa4
28 Rxe6	Bf8
29 Ne5	Re7
30 Rxe7	Bxe7
31 Qg6	Qe8
32 Nf5!	

And since 32...Qxg6 33 Nxe7ch is curtains, the game ended with...

32 ...	Nxh5
33 Nxh6ch	Kf8
34 Nd7ch!	Black Resigns

(17) Kupreychik-Vaganyan, U.S.S.R. 1980

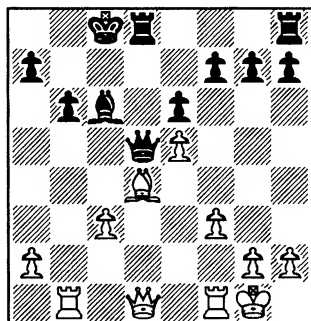
1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	Ne7
4 Nf3	b6
5 c4	Bb7

White's intention was to meet 5...Ba6 with 6 b3!, keeping matters closed. Now 6 Nc3, Qd7 7 Be2 would lead into Sax-Short, London 1980 which turned out well for White when Black failed to enter the complications after 7...Nbc6 8 0-0, dxc4 9 Bxc4, of 9...0-0-0!. Black has to consider the counterchances against d4 in such lines or he will have no target at all to pressure.

6 Nc3	Qd7
7 cxd5	Nxd5
8 Bd3	c5
9 0-0	Nxc3
10 bxc3	cxd4

Black may have been concerned about the surprising 10...Nc6 11 dxc5!, after which White gets more out of the opening of the d-file than Black gets from the weakness of c3, e.g. 11...Bxc5 12 Qe2, Rd8 13 Bc2. This also explains White's next move.

11 Nxd4!?	Nc6
12 Rb1	Bc5!
13 Be3	0-0-0
14 Bb5	Bxd4?!)
15 Bxd4	Qd5
16 Bxc6	Bxc6
17 f3	



The resulting bishops-of-opposite color position will favor the player who can open the game for his rooks and bishops. If White can play a2-a4-a5 this will mean him; if Black achieves ...g7-g5-g4 it will be him.

17 ...	h5
18 a4	Kb7

19 Qe2	Qa5!
20 Rb4	Rd5
21 Rfb1	Rhd8
22 h4	Ka8
23 Kh2	Bxa4?
24 Bxb6!	axb6
25 Rxb6	

White cracks through on the b-file now (25...R7d5 26 Ra6ch; 25...Bb5 26 R6xb5).

25 ...	Ka7
26 Rb7ch	Ka8
27 Qb2	R8d7
28 Rxd7?	

Much simpler was 28 Rb8ch and 29 Ra8ch!

28 ...	Rb5
29 Qe2	Rxe5

Now Black saw that 29...Rxb1 is met by 30 Qe4ch.

30 Rd8ch	Black Resigns
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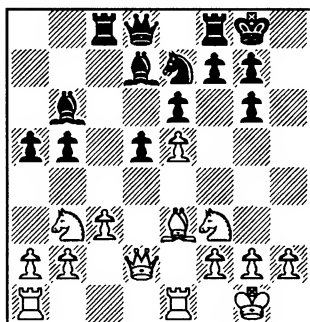
(18) Renet-Mellado, Palma de Mallorca 1989

1 e4	e6
2 d4	d5
3 e5	Bd7
4 Nf3	a6
5 Nbd2	c5
6 dxc5!	Bxc5
7 Bd3	Ne7
8 Nb3	Bb6
9 Bf4	Nbc6
10 0-0	Ng6
11 Bg3	0-0
12 Bxg6!?	

An intriguing decision. White has decided to anticipate 12...f6. Now 12...fxg6! would sharply reduce White's attacking chances.

12 ...	hxg6
13 Re1	Ne7
14 Nbd4	Rc8
15 c3	Bc5

16 Qd2	b5
17 Bf4	a5
18 Nb3!	Bb6
19 Be3	



Black's decision at moves 15-17 to advance his queenside inspired White to exploit the weakened dark squares, particularly c5.

19 ...	Rc4
20 Rac1	Nf5
21 Bxb6	Qxb6
22 Nbd4	b4
23 Nxf5	gxf5
24 Qg5	

Switching back to the kingside, with the plan of Qh5, Ng5 and Qh7ch.

24 ...	Rfc8
25 Qh5	Be8
26 Ng5!	bxc3
27 bxc3	Rxc3
28 Rcd1	

Black has won the queenside but his inability to hold h7 or g7 costs him the game.

28 ...	Rc2
29 Rf1	Qb2
30 Qh7ch	Kf8
31 Qh8ch	Ke7
32 Qxg7	Rc1
33 Nxf7	Rd1
34 Ng5ch	Black Resigns

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